



Fearless Innovator Award

Celebrating Boldness and Creativity

Have you ever taken a leap into the unknown in your role at the university? Whether you're an instructor, student, or staff, we know that innovation in teaching and learning comes with risks, and not every innovation hits the bullseye. Enter the Fearless Innovator Award—our way of celebrating those bold innovators and the invaluable lessons that come through our failures.

In alignment with the University of Alberta's [A Culture of Care](#), this award embraces psychological safety by celebrating the creative risks and inevitable missteps on our path to innovation. By acknowledging and learning from our failures, we foster a supportive environment where everyone is encouraged to develop a growth mindset, ensuring that every member of our community feels safe to explore and express new ideas. This award embraces the [Student Experience Action Plan \(SEAP\)](#) principles of *exploration is essential* and *challenge accepted*! This award further aims to support the [SHAPE](#) initiative to foster a culture rich in creativity and steadfast in the pursuit of continuous improvement.

Eligibility

Open to all current University of Alberta community members—instructors, staff, and students. This award invites individuals who have undertaken a bold initiative or project to enhance teaching and learning to share their experiences. Efforts can span innovations in administration, student services, community engagement, and other areas integral to university life.

Each category of the university community has its own Fearless Innovator award to recognize their unique contributions: one for instructors, one for staff, and one for students.

Application Requirements

1. The Innovation

Describe the innovation you attempted (lesson, activity, new technology, study technique, etc.), and what your intended goals were. Then, tell us how it all fell apart.

2. Lessons Learned

Reflect on the following:

- **The Challenges:** Why did it go wrong? Consider aspects like misjudging abilities, technical glitches, or other unexpected outcomes.
- **Insights Gained:** What did this experience teach you about your role, the university environment, and/or the broader community that the university is situated in.
- **Moving Forward:** How would you modify your approach if you had the opportunity to do it over? Or would you even attempt it again?

3. Share Your Wisdom

Outline how your hard-earned insights could inform and benefit other educators, students, or staff at the university.

Formatting Guidelines

Express your journey in your own way. Submissions can be in the form of written documents, audio or video recordings, graphics, animations, or any innovative format you envision.

Translation services are available upon request at no cost to the applicant.

Written Format

- Format: Typed in an accessible PDF document
- Font: Calibri, 11 point
- Spacing: Single-spaced
- Margins: 1-inch on all sides
- Page Size: Standard letter size (8.5x11 inches)
- **Length: Maximum of 5 pages**

Audio Submissions

- Format: MP3 or WAV file
- Quality: Clear audio quality, minimal background noise
- Content: Clearly state your name and the title of your submission at the beginning
- **Length: Maximum of 5 minutes**

Video Submissions

- Format: Please provide a link to your uploaded video on Yuja, YouTube, or Google Drive
- Resolution: At least 720p
- Content: Begin with a brief introduction including your name and the purpose of the video
- **Length: Maximum of 5 minutes**

Graphics/Animation

- Format: JPEG, PNG for images; GIF or MP4 for animations
- Resolution: A suggested resolution of 1920x1080 pixels for clarity
- Content: Should visually represent "The Flop", "Lessons Learned", and "Share the Wisdom" sections

Innovative Formats

If you have a unique format idea that has not been mentioned, please send your proposed idea to excellence.awards@ualberta.ca. We are open to creative and new ways of expressing educational experiences.

The [Digital Scholarship Centre](#) offers support for the creation and production of multimedia resources, including access to a new media studio, assistance with video production, and [free consultations with knowledgeable staff](#).

Adjudication Criteria

The following criteria will be used to guide the adjudication process in selecting successful applicants:

1. Innovativeness of the Initiative:

- a. Degree to which the initiative attempted to introduce new ideas, methods, or technologies.
- b. Creativity and originality of the approach.

2. Relevance and Impact:

- a. Potential impact of the proposed innovation on improving practices within the university.
- b. Relevance of the initiative to current challenges or opportunities in university life.

3. Reflection and Insights:

- a. Depth of analysis regarding why the initiative did not meet expectations.
- b. Clarity and significance of the insights gained from the experience.
- c. Thoughtfulness in reflecting on personal and/or team growth through the process.

4. Potential for Future Application:

- a. Feasibility of applying the learned lessons to future projects or initiatives.
- b. Constructive plans for re-approaching the initiative or influencing future work.

5. Communication and Presentation:

- a. Clarity and coherence of the submission.
- b. Ability to engage and inform an audience about the lessons learned.
- c. Quality of the presentation in the chosen format (written, audio, video, etc.).

6. Alignment with SHAPE Goals strategic initiatives:

- a. How well the initiative and its reflection support the objectives of strategic initiatives:
 - i. [SHAPE](#),
 - ii. Our institutional commitments to enhancing access, building interconnected and vibrant communities and promoting experiences of belonging for all members of our community in keeping with Changing the Story: An Integrated Action Plan, and

- iii. [Braiding Past, Present, and Future: University of Alberta's Indigenous Strategic Plan.](#)

Deadline and Submission

Deadline: Please submit your application **by 9:00 a.m. on Monday, February 2, 2026.**

File Naming Convention

Name your file as: `Lastname_Firstname_FearlessInnovator.pdf`

Submit your complete application online through the [Fearless Innovator Award](#) website.

Selection Process

Committee proceedings are to be confidential. Many considerations guide the development of the adjudication committee, including a range of expertise that will enhance the Committee's ability to execute this process using an equity lens.

Recognition

In alignment with our SHAPE mission to foster transformative impact, winners will be announced at the annual *Celebrate! Teaching, Learning, Research* event.

- Fearless Innovator Award - Instructor
- Fearless Innovator Award - Staff
- Fearless Innovator Award - Undergraduate Student
- Fearless Innovator Award - Graduate Student

Support

If you require assistance please contact us at excellence.awards@ualberta.ca.

Protection of Privacy - *Personal information provided is collected in accordance with Section 4(c) of the Alberta Protection of Privacy Act (POPA) and will be protected in accordance with section 10 and used and disclosed in accordance with sections 12 and 13 of the Act. It will be used and disclosed for the purpose of adjudicating the Fearless Innovator Awards.*

The University of Alberta uses automated systems to generate content and to make decisions, recommendations, and predictions. The personal information collected may be included in these automated systems.

Should you require further information about collection, use and disclosure of personal information, please contact excellence.awards@ualberta.ca.