



Idaho GEM Innovative Educator Award Nominations

Context

The GEM Innovative Educator Award (GEM Award) honors faculty members that demonstrate their passion and craft in advancing the skills, knowledge, and interests of students through general education courses. Through this award, Idaho's State Board of Education, the statewide General Education Committee, and general education faculty formally recognize the work of educators who help non-majors understand and broadly apply disciplinary methods of inquiry (ways of knowing) and engage students with innovative teaching practices to build [durable skills](#) that students will use in college and beyond. This year's GEM Awards will focus on highlighting faculty who help non-majors understand and apply the ways of knowing in their course(s). In addition, the award also seeks to recognize faculty who use [High Impact Practices](#) in their course(s) or [activities that prepare students for high impact practices](#) later in their academic career. These awards also acknowledge faculty commitment to general education as well as those who actively work to ameliorate issues of educational access and affordability through Open Educational Practices.

Eligibility

Full- and part-time general education faculty from any public Idaho college or university may apply. Because many excellent educators support general education in Idaho, past awardees will not be considered for awards. Past nominees who have not won the GEM Innovative Educator Award are encouraged to apply.

Process

1. Office of the State Board (OSBE) staff release call for nominations in late **February**
2. Campuses send nominees' materials to [OSBE staff](#) by **April 3**
3. OSBE staff share nominees' materials with the broader GEM community by **April 6**
4. The eight institution representatives on the [General Education Committee](#) evaluate materials and submit their rankings to the Office of the State Board by **April 30**
5. OSBE staff analyze consensus among rankings and notify winners by **May 8**
6. Winners receive a plaque and \$500 honorarium during a showcase of their innovative work at the **2026 GEM Summit: October 1 & 2 in Boise, Idaho**

Directions

The next two pages feature the list of required information/materials for nominations as well as a rubric to guide the evaluation of materials. Please [contact Dr. Jonathan Lashley](#) with any questions

GEM Award Application

Nominee Information

Name of Faculty Nominee:

College/University:

Nominee's Discipline Group:

- | | |
|---|--|
| ☐ Written Communication | ☐ Humanistic and Artistic Ways of Knowing |
| ☐ Oral Communication | ☐ Mathematical Ways of Knowing |
| ☐ Scientific Ways of Knowing | ☐ Social and Behavioral Ways of Knowing |

Required Materials

☐ **Nomination Letter**

One letter, maximum 500 words (no more than 2 pages), from a dean, department chair, or faculty colleague that speaks to how the nominee meets criteria in the attached rubric including length of service in General Education both in teaching and support.

☐ **Candidate Statement**

A maximum 500-word (about 2 page) summary from the nominee about their work and interest in general education. should describe how they help their students achieve general education outcomes; for example, they should highlight how they teach durable skills, employ high impact teaching practices, promote disciplinary methods of inquiry for non-majors, and/or help students understand the important role of general education in their academic journey.

☐ **Sample Assignment + Justification**

In addition to the candidate statement, candidates should submit a specific assignment they teach that is relevant, engaging, and effective in their GEM area. A focus on assignments that highlight [durable skills](#) instruction is strongly encouraged. Please include the assignment/activity + a short (no more than 250 words) statement by the instructor that a) describes the course and justifies why they chose to highlight this assignment and b) explains how it relates to practices outlined in the candidate statement. Finalists will be contacted to include their materials in a forthcoming durable skills/general education teaching repository.

Note for nominators and nominees: The nomination letter and the candidate statement should provide evidence of what the candidate has accomplished. Following are possible examples of evidence to **refer** to in the letter: syllabi revisions; supervisor/colleague observations; peer/student testimonials; student work/outcomes; general education assessment data; modified assignments; formal student evaluations; open, low-, or no-cost course material use; development of co-requisite support courses; reduction of special course fees; discussion of length of time, variety of courses or number of Gen Ed courses taught; and alternative delivery of instruction (online, hybrid, evening, weekend, intensive, etc.). Please keep in mind that all submitted materials may be shared publicly and only the required items bulleted above will be considered

How GEM Award Nominations are Evaluated

Evaluation Rubric

The following is intended to support the systematic review of materials and help evaluators rank nominees, not to determine awardees.

Evaluation Criteria	A Clear Priority	Somewhat a Priority	Present	Absent
DURABLE SKILLS FOCUS The instructor enables students to better understand and develop durable skills along with the course content. <i>*Evidence may include the submitted assignment and nominator letter and candidate statement (e.g. evidence from student comments, observations, etc.) A clear advantage would be given to candidates that specifically describe assignment(s) or class activities that overtly reference and teach students to reflect on and engage in durable skills.</i>	5	3	1	0
GENERAL EDUCATION FOCUS The instructor promotes better understanding and application of disciplinary methods of inquiry (ways of knowing) for non-majors to expand their knowledge and skillsets. <i>*Evidence may include the submitted assignment and nominator letter and candidate statement (e.g. evidence from student comments, observations, etc.) A clear advantage would be given to candidates that specifically describe assignment(s) or class activities that support students in translating learning into other disciplinary and life contexts.</i>	5	3	1	0
HIGH IMPACT PRACTICES The instructor designs the GEM course creatively/innovatively using high impact practices to effectively engage students. This could include activities that prepare students for high impact practices often used later in a student's academic career. <i>*Evidence should include a discussion of which high impact practices (linked above) are used and their positive impact on students. This evidence may be included in the submitted assignment, the nomination letter, the candidate statement, or from student comments, observations, etc. included as part of a nominee's submission.</i>	5	3	1	0
	Clearly Present		Unclear/Absent	
Open Education Practices The instructor has a record of increasing educational access and affordability for students <i>*Evidence may include the use of open educational resources (OER), open educational practices (OEP), collaboratively sharing/creating resources with others, strategic use of library resources, etc.</i>	1		0	
GENERAL EDUCATION SERVICE The instructor supports the goals of general education through mentoring other faculty, participation in institution-specific and statewide general education initiatives <i>*Evidence may include participation in institutional professional development, program assessment efforts, disciplinary working groups, faculty fellowships, GEM Summits, policy development, dual credit liaison work, teaching load flexibility, etc.</i>	1		0	
TOTAL POINTS				
				/17

How GEM Award Nominations are Evaluated

Selecting Winners

Consensus among the rankings of the Committee members in each GEM area determines each award winner. Any ties will be settled by the consensus of the [General Education Committee](#).