

**BYLAWS**  
**The University of Texas at Tyler**  
**Academy of Distinguished Teachers (ADT)**

**I. Background**

During the spring of 2015, President Rodney Mabry approved the creation of The University of Texas at Tyler’s Academy of Distinguished Teachers (the Academy) to recognize and honor outstanding teaching. The original proposal developed by Dr. Neil Gray, Fellow of the University of Texas System Academy of Distinguished Teachers and Dr. Ross Sherman, Interim Provost, stated:

*“The Academy will recognize UT Tyler educators who have demonstrated leadership in education and are committed to improving learning across the university. The Academy will encourage and help sustain pedagogical excellence at UT Tyler by serving as role models for their colleagues, fostering research on university teaching and learning, and advising the institution on teaching policies and practices.”*

During the fall of 2022 the Academy incorporated UT System Shine Academy members; The mission of Shine Academy is to serve the University of Texas System (UTS) through the support and promotion of excellence in all aspects of health science education, educational scholarship and leadership.

Shine Academy members will adhere to the Academy bylaws as well as Shine Bylaws maintained by the UT System Office of the Executive Vice Chancellor of Health Affairs. Shine Academy Members as part of ADT may elect to apply to become a Fellow and active member of the Academy.

**II. Name**

The name of the society is The University of Texas at Tyler Academy of Distinguished Teachers.

**III. Goals of the Academy**

Fellows and Shine Academy Members of the Academy form an organization of distinguished scholars of the first order recognized for teaching excellence, who are committed to the advancement of teaching and learning across UT Tyler.

The goals of Academy Fellows are:

- To advocate for, promote, and celebrate teaching excellence at UT Tyler.
- To serve as a university-level advisory and advocacy group dedicated to fostering classroom innovation and teaching excellence.
- To facilitate the sharing of best practices in teaching across disciplines, colleges, and departments through workshops, seminars, discussion panels, etc.
- To promote an understanding of the complex and diverse nature of discovery, teaching, and learning and the importance of scholarly and creative activity to the learning process.
- To foster the integration of the scholarship of teaching and learning with the scholarship of discovery to reinforce a culture of teacher-scholars.
- To provide a forum that brings together faculty, staff, and students to share opportunities for teaching, learning, and scholarship.

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**IV. Organization**

**A. Membership**

Membership as an appointed “Fellow” of the Academy is a title that reflects both recognition of teaching excellence achievement and commitment to service in support of the Academy’s mission. Selection for Fellow status is based on sustained excellence in teaching combined with demonstrated contributions to advancing educational excellence at The University of Texas at Tyler.

Standards for admission to “Fellow” status in the Academy will be of the highest order, only educators recognized for teaching excellence at the system, state, national, or international level from across the campus will be considered for membership.

The Academy inducted eleven Founding Fellows in 2015, and up to two new Fellows may be inducted each year thereafter. In exceptional cases, additional inductions may occur to ensure appropriate recognition of outstanding teaching excellence.

**B. Officers**

The officers of the Academy include Fellows who are elected to President, Past-President, President-Elect, Treasurer and Secretary. Any active Fellow is eligible to hold office following their first year of membership in the Academy.

**C. Board**

The officers of the Academy and the chairs of standing committees shall together constitute the Executive Board charged with direction of the Academy’s mission. The Executive Board shall include Fellows from at least three departments. Their duties include nominating slates of new officers and committee chairs. To do this, the Executive Board will convene at least four weeks prior to the Spring induction and business meeting and submit a slate to the entire membership two weeks prior to that meeting.

**D. Committee Chairs**

Fellows who are elected to committee chair will serve two-year terms. Nominations for chairs will be solicited and accepted; in the event there is only a single person nominated that person may be appointed by acclamation. In the event of multiple candidates then an election will take place. The process of installing committee chairs will take place at the Spring meeting and committees will be subsequently constituted.

**E. Duties of Officers.**

**Executive Board Members** shall represent the Academy as requested by the Office of the President and Provost. The Executive Board may assume the responsibilities of any committee chair in their absence.

**President** – The President, or President-Elect in the President’s absence, shall preside over all official meetings. The President shall oversee the Executive Board, ensure compliance with the bylaws, and manage the Academy’s email, archives, and calendar invitations, including ADT events, Executive Board meetings, and Academy membership meetings. The President shall

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serve as the primary representative of the Academy to the Office of the Provost and Academic Affairs.

**Immediate Past-President** – The Immediate Past-President shall provide guidance and support to the President, Executive Board, and Academy administration.

**President-Elect** – The President-Elect shall provide support to the President, Immediate Past-President, and Executive Board in the execution of their duties.

**Treasurer** – The Treasurer shall oversee the finances of the Academy, including preparation of an annual budget. Responsibilities include managing all Academy funds and the Academy cost center, authorizing disbursements with Executive Board approval, and reporting financial statements at Academy meetings.

**Secretary** – The Secretary shall prepare minutes for all official meetings of the Executive Board and the Academy, distributing them via Academy email at least one week in advance for approval at the start of each meeting. The Secretary shall maintain archives of all Academy activities, solicit committee meeting minutes each semester, and maintain vitae, attendance records, and other vital records of all members. The Secretary is also responsible for updating Academy member bios on the website, at minimum following the induction of new members each spring.

**F. Election of Officers**

Including the President, officers will be elected to a two (2) year term by majority vote of those present at the Spring business meeting. Nominees must be active Fellows and nominations must be circulated to Fellow status Academy membership two weeks prior to the meeting. Upon completion of such one (2) year term, the President-Elect shall succeed to the office of President for a two (2) year term. In turn, the President shall succeed to the office of Past-President for a two (2) year term. The terms of the officers will begin May 15.

**G. Vacancies**

The President-Elect shall become the President in the event of a vacancy in the office of the current President. The President, with the advice and consent of the Executive Board, shall appoint an Academy member to fill any other vacant position on the Executive Board or any committee.

**H. Committees**

Standing committees shall include:

1. Membership Committee
2. Events and Outreach Committee
3. Governance Committee

Additional standing or ad hoc committees may be formed by the President with advice and consent of the Executive Board. Additional standing or ad hoc committees may include, but are not limited to:

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1. Fund Raising Committee
2. Communication and Website Development Committee
3. Outcome and Assessment Committee
4. Other ad hoc committees to address specific needs of the Academy

**V. Standing Committees**

**A. Membership Committee**

The Membership Committee is charged with developing and maintaining the criteria and procedures for Academy membership, subject to approval by the Academy. These criteria and procedures shall be published on the Academy website. The committee shall strive to ensure representation across disciplines in its recommendations.

The Membership Committee shall review nominations and recommend new Academy members annually. The Committee Chair shall coordinate with the Academy President to arrange recognition of newly inducted Fellows, including presentation of plaques during the spring Faculty/Staff University Awards ceremony.

A majority of the Membership Committee shall be comprised of past recipients of the Regents' Outstanding Teaching Award (ROTA). In addition to membership recommendations, the Committee shall review ROTA nomination materials and provide feedback on each applicant to the Provost.

Voting for or ranking ROTA nominees is limited to past ROTA recipients who have participated in the Committee's ROTA evaluation process. All Academy Fellows who are past ROTA recipients are encouraged to participate in Membership Committee meetings during the evaluation period to be eligible to vote or rank nominees.

**B. Events and Outreach Committee**

The Events and Outreach Committee is charged with conceiving, planning, promoting, and running Academy events that may include, but are not limited to, such things as the new member induction ceremony event, campus outreach for events including scheduling on the professional development calendar and disseminating event information to the campus community, hosting faculty forums/panel discussions, and teaching conferences. The events committee will propose Academy events to the full Academy membership and all approved events will be advertised and presented on the Academy website as well as the UT Tyler Professional Development calendar.

**C. Governance Committee**

The Governance Committee is charged with periodic review, adherence, and updates to the Academy's bylaws to ensure compliance, clarity, and alignment with the Academy's mission and practices.

The Governance Committee shall propose amendments as needed; however, all bylaw amendments must be approved by the Academy membership. In the absence of a Committee Chair, the Executive Board shall assume responsibility for advancing proposed amendments.

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Bylaws may be amended by a two-thirds vote of Active Fellows present at a regular meeting, provided that proposed amendments are distributed to the membership at least two weeks prior to the vote.

**D. Executive Board Oversight of Committees**

The Executive Board will identify the need for new standing and ad hoc committees and shall formulate statements of charge for such committees. Committee chairs and members will be appointed by the President with advice and consent of the Executive Board, after consultation with the members. All committees will have a chair and representative members. The President, with the advice and consent of the Executive Board, will decide how many members will serve on each standing or ad hoc committee.

**VI. Meetings**

The Executive Board will call all meetings of the Academy membership. These shall be three in number, with specified business as follows:

- Fall Meeting (usually in September)  
Business: Planning, induction of new Academy Fellows
- Winter Meeting (usually in February):  
Business: Planning
- Spring Meeting (usually in April):  
Business: Selection of new Academy Fellows, and—every other year—election of new officers and committee chairs

Besides the business specified above, the general purpose of each meeting may also include committee reports, new business, and strategic discussion of the Academy's mission. The Executive Board may call a meeting after written petition from 1/3 of the active members of the Academy, or when the Executive Board deems appropriate or critical to the Academy's mission.

**VII. Membership**

**A. Criteria for ADT Fellow Membership**

Eligible members of the Academy shall represent the highest standards of teaching excellence at The University of Texas at Tyler. Membership as a Fellow is a title that recognizes an elite group of educators who demonstrate sustained excellence in teaching at the undergraduate or graduate levels, combined with significant contributions to the educational mission of UT Tyler.

**Eligibility Requirements:**

- A minimum of three years of full-time teaching experience at UT Tyler
- Evidence of sustained teaching excellence at UT Tyler, accompanied by recognition for teaching achievements at the system, state, national, or international level

**Selection Process:**

- Selection is competitive and based on a holistic review of teaching effectiveness, innovation, impact, and service
- Up to two new members may be inducted each academic year

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- *In exceptional cases, including years in which multiple candidates have received distinguished teaching honors through the UT System, additional fellows may be elected to ensure appropriate recognition of excellence*
- Priority consideration will be given to applicants who are recipients of the UT System SHINE Award or the Regents' Outstanding Teaching Award (ROTA)

**B. Criteria for Shine Academy Membership**

Members of the Shine Academy actively participate in its mission to serve the University of Texas System through the support and promotion of excellence in all aspects of health science education, educational scholarship and leadership. New members are selected annually from the faculty and professional education staff of The University of Texas System health institutions. For more information regarding the nomination and selection process, see the Members' Documents and the Candidate Application Form on the UT System Shine website. UT System Shine bylaws shall govern matters specific to Shine Membership.

**C. Nomination and Election Procedures**

Detailed nomination and election procedures for Fellow membership are posted on the Academy website. The Membership Committee shall utilize established criteria to ensure consistency in the evaluation and ranking of applicants, with representation across disciplines and the broader campus community.

Membership in the Academy is intended to be lifelong. The Academy expects members to maintain a level of educational engagement that meets or exceeds the standard required for admission. Members are expected to sustain the level of educational effort and commitment to teaching excellence that qualified them for membership.

All members shall serve as ambassadors of the Academy and promote teaching excellence across the University. Members are expected to actively participate in committees, as well as formal and informal programs and activities that advance the mission of the Academy.

Continued engagement is essential to sustaining active membership in the Academy.

**D. Categories of Membership**

The Academy recognizes the following categories of membership:

- **Founding Fellow** – A member of the original cohort of Academy Fellows inducted in 2015.
- **Fellow** – A member selected through a rigorous application and approval process who maintains active participation in the Academy, as outlined in the Bylaws.
- **Associate Fellow** – A former Fellow who no longer meets the requirements for active participation or does not maintain a sustained record of teaching excellence and contribution to the development of teaching practices among colleagues.
- **Emeritus Fellow** – A Fellow or Founding Fellow who has retired or resigned from The University of Texas at Tyler, or who has completed ten (10) or more consecutive years of service as a Fellow in the Academy.
- **Shine Academy Member** – A member of the University of Texas System Shine Academy. Individuals in this category may apply separately for Academy Fellow status.

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- **Fellow, Shine Academy Member** – A member who has been selected as a Fellow of the Academy through the established application and approval process and who maintains active participation, while also holding lifetime membership in the UT System Shine Academy. Individuals in this category may also be designated as an Associate Fellow if Active Fellow requirements are not maintained.

**E. Induction**

Upon induction into the Academy, a new member is granted the designation of “Fellow.” This designation recognizes the individual’s qualifications and contributions that met the criteria for Academy membership.

**F. Active Fellow**

To maintain Active Fellow status, through active participation, members are expected to:

- Serve on at least one Academy committee or the Executive Board
- Actively participate in general and committee meetings
- Attend and/or contribute to Academy events
- Engage in activities that support and promote the Academy’s mission
- Participate in a minimum of two ADT events per academic year, unless excused for university-related obligations (e.g., teaching, conferences, required meetings)

Extenuating Circumstances:

If a Fellow is unable to meet these expectations due to extenuating circumstances, documentation must be submitted to the Executive Board via the Academy email. Approval requires a two-thirds majority vote of the Executive Board.

**High-Level Leadership Considerations:**

Any active Fellow or active member who holds a high-level leadership position within the institution (e.g., deans, C-suite executives, vice presidents, provosts, or president) may be granted modified participation expectations due to institutional responsibilities. Such members may retain Active fellow status by participating in at least one ADT general meeting (Fall, Winter, or Spring) or one ADT-sponsored/participating event per academic year (e.g., Forums, New Faculty Orientation, Annual Event). Should their role change while remaining active, these members shall continue to abide by the standard bylaws applicable to all members with retained active status. A formal request for modified participation should be submitted to the Academy email. Approval of modified participation status may be reviewed annually by the executive Board.

**G. Fellow Status (Review and Associate Fellow Designation)**

All Fellows’ participation is tracked by the Secretary and reviewed annually by the Executive Board Committee following the winter meeting and prior to the spring meeting.

- Fellows who do not meet Active Fellow requirements may be reclassified as “Associate Fellow” upon:
  - Recommendation by the Executive Board Committee
  - Approval by a two-thirds vote of members present at the spring Academy meeting
- Notification and Appeal:  
Members will be notified via Academy email and given two weeks to provide documentation if they believe the status change was made in error.

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- Associate Fellow Guidelines:
  - May serve on committees
  - May not vote in Academy meetings
  - May be reinstated to Fellow status after two consecutive years of meeting participation requirements
- Annual Reporting:  
Each May, the Academy President will submit an updated membership roster to the Provost for conferral of the honorific title of “Distinguished Teaching Professor.”

**H. Criteria for Emeritus Fellow**

A Fellow or Founding Fellow may be designated as an Emeritus Fellow upon meeting one of the following criteria:

- Retirement or resignation as a faculty member from The University of Texas at Tyler; or
- Completion of ten (10) or more consecutive years of service as a Fellow in the Academy

Emeritus status is intended for individuals who no longer meet the criteria for active Academy membership but have demonstrated sustained contribution and service.

Request and Approval Process:

Emeritus Fellow status must be formally requested by the member and submitted via the Academy email. Final approval is granted by the Executive Board Committee.

Rights and Responsibilities:

Emeritus Fellows may not serve on committees

Emeritus Fellows are encouraged to attend meetings but may not vote, except in the case of ROTA awardees, who retain voting privileges for future ROTA nominees

Reinstatement:

An Emeritus Fellow who returns to any University of Texas institution or wishes to resume active participation may request reinstatement to Fellow status, subject to Executive Board approval.

Posthumous Recognition:

Emeritus Fellow status shall be conferred upon an active Fellow who passes away.

Limitations:

An Associate Fellow who resigns or retires is not eligible for Emeritus Fellow status.

**VIII. Honorific Title**

Academy “Fellows” may use the title of Distinguished Teaching Professor in accordance with the UT System Regents’ “Rule 31001: Faculty Appointments and Titles” and the University of Texas at Tyler Handbook of Operating Procedures. “In recognition of their significant contributions to education, members of an institutional academy of distinguished teachers may use the honorific title Distinguished Teaching Professor.” Any “Associate Fellow” and “Shine Academy Member” may not use the title of Distinguished Teaching Professor.