HELPFUL TIPS IN SUBMITTING SUCCESSFUL VICE CHANCELLOR’S AWARDS IN EXCELLENCE
[based on input received from past selection committees]

Established in 1980, the Vice Chancellor’s Awards in Excellence provide an excellent opportunity to recognize outstanding faculty and staff from within Texas A&M AgriLife. Nominations to the awards program are usually well-prepared and reflect well on the excellence of the nominees. However, sometimes more can be done to strengthen the nature of award nominations.

These “helpful hints” are intended to aid in the preparation of award nominations and letters of support/recommendation so that your nomination will be successful in addressing the criteria and improving the communication of main ideas involved in the awards program. These comments reflect the experience of selection committee members who have reviewed more than 100+ nomination submissions in prior years.

1. **Vita Form**: Don’t just use an existing resume because “it is easy.” Follow the clearly stated guidelines for the vita form. Make sure that the professional contributions of the nominee are clearly communicated and focus on the criteria for the award. After covering the required information, and space permitting, include a summary of the key projects, products, or recent activities which reflect and communicate the impact of the nominee’s contributions and commitment to excellence. Evidence of other recognitions received by the nominee should also be included. Where explicitly permitted, you should include a list of NO MORE THAN 12 recent publications within the past five (5) years that reflect the contributions and impact of the nominee’s program.

2. **Letter of Nomination (TWO PAGES MAXIMUM)**: The nomination letter should be more than a “letter of transmittal.” It must be carefully written and should focus on the nominee’s contributions. Limited reference to the nominee’s job description or responsibilities is appropriate as an introduction, but the main body should include a clear and concise case regarding the nominee’s contributions and demonstration of excellence. The letter should provide evidence to support this by describing specific examples of excellence and summarizing information from the vita. Refer to the award’s criteria and concentrate on the nominee’s attributes that contribute to excellent performance. Be clear and succinct in making the case for the nominee.

3. **Supporting Letters (ONE PAGE MAXIMUM)**: These letters are solicited by the preparer from other individuals. As such, it is expected that the tone and supporting evidence presented will vary somewhat. However, the letter writer should be provided with a copy of the nominee’s vita and the award guidelines and criteria. Letters should be current and address the current nomination and award category. Outdated letters drawn from previous awards submissions do not demonstrate a strong case on the part of the presenter.

4. **Guidelines Provided**: All letters and forms should follow the guidelines in terms of length, page limits, and font size. Committee members have found that those not following the basic guidelines tend to be difficult to read and do not communicate the ideas of excellence intended by the preparer.