

Apply for the 2024 Delphi Award

Presented by USC's Pullias Center for Higher Education, in partnership with AAC&U,
and generously supported by TIAA Institute



The Delphi Award: Background & Goals

We use the term **VITAL faculty** (Levy, 2019) — an asset-based term — to refer to contingent or non-tenure track faculty (including visiting faculty, instructors and lecturers, adjuncts, research faculty, and clinical faculty) as a way to affirm what they are, rather than what they are not.

The employment practices, policies, programs, and models for VITAL (Visiting, Instructing, Temporary, Adjunct and Lecturing) faculty are not aligned with the intended direction of college completion and student success initiatives on a majority of campuses — and instead, interfere with these goals, causing broad problems in higher education. With the goal of addressing this misalignment, the Delphi Award has two primary purposes:

1. To encourage campuses, groups, departments, or academic units to rethink VITAL faculty models, practices, programs, and policies; and
2. To provide material support that helps colleges and universities overcome barriers to scaling the innovative faculty supports they have initiated.

Over the last two decades, the campus environments and faculty life have changed radically. Various studies from the Delphi Project on the Changing Faculty and Student Success have demonstrated how changes work directly against the types of support needed for student success, and especially for first-generation, underrepresented minority and low-income students.

- Currently, more than 70% of all faculty at colleges and universities are in VITAL faculty positions.
- Many VITAL faculty lack needed resources, including an office on campus for meeting with students and administrative support, and they are generally not compensated for their labor, including in supporting students and providing service to their campuses and community.
- VITAL faculty generally have minimal time to prepare for classes and are often hired days before the class starts.
- Often, VITAL faculty members are left out of discussions and planning around curriculum or broader program and college goals.
- Typically, VITAL faculty are excluded from professional development where they might participate in discussions about pedagogies that support student success such as collaborative or active learning.
- VITAL faculty have limited information about the students they teach because they are not invited to or compensated for attending orientations or sessions where information about students and their background are shared.

The purpose of the Delphi Award is to support policies, practices, and programs that ameliorate the issues facing VITAL faculty. This is particularly important because VITAL faculty bring assets and benefits to campuses, departments, and academic units but are often prevented from using their talents effectively to support students and contribute to institutional priorities aligned with improving campus(es) and contributing to the learning mission of higher education.



Who Can Apply

We seek applications from a wide range of groups at multiple levels who have made changes to support their VITAL faculty. Eligibility includes small groups (faculty task forces, faculty senates) as well as larger groups and organizations (e.g. associations, disciplinary societies, consortia). An individual may apply, but it **MUST** be on behalf of their institution.

Applicants are not limited to colleges or universities, but we require that applicants show they are connected to and have an impact on colleges or universities, given that colleges and universities are the primary contexts wherein VITAL faculty do their work (see the Criteria section in this document, and on the application for details).



Ready to Apply?

Once you've reviewed all the Award eligibility and criteria on this page, and available online, complete and submit your application online via the Delphi Award application form.

The Delphi Award application is also available (**for preview only**) at the end of this document.

The application window for the 2024 Award will open on February 26, 2024 and close on Friday, June 28, 2024.



How to Win the Delphi Award

We hope to select winners that have made alterations such as the following:

1. Practice (e.g., appropriate orientations, responsible hiring processes, feedback and evaluation, prioritization of issues related to contingent faculty)

2. Policies (e.g., promotion and advancement, participation in governance, compensation, academic freedom protections)
3. Programs and Services (e.g., mentoring, leadership development, professional development processes)
4. Implementation of new faculty models (e.g. a new contract type or model of faculty beyond the adjunct or research-intensive faculty model. See the **Adapting by Design** report for examples.)

For further ideas or to see if the work you are doing might be applicable for this award, see the **Case Studies** from previous winners.

Above all, we seek applications that demonstrate concrete changes that support VITAL faculty on college or university campuses.



What's the Criteria? How We Determine the Winners

The following criteria is used to evaluate the degree to which applications provide evidence that the policy, program, practice, or model:

1. Is designed in keeping with strategic institutional priorities, is aligned with improving campus(es) goals, and contributes to the learning mission of higher education.
2. Was enacted in partnership or with support from one or more host colleges or universities.
3. Is assisting VITAL faculty in being more effective in their work.
4. Can be scaled, replicated, and/or emulated at other institutions (e.g., other institutions might be able to adopt the approach with minimum difficulty).
5. Has been designed in collaboration with the VITAL faculty that the program, policy, practice, or model is aimed at.
6. Is being institutionalized and will be sustained. Evidence may entail inclusion in strategic plans, stated leadership commitment, fundraising and development aimed at supporting the practice, or other demonstrations of continuity beyond the first year of implementation.
7. Employs a theory of action that explains how the program, policy, practice or model supports VITAL faculty, and how that support helps VITAL faculty in turn contribute to institutional priorities aligned with improving campus(es).

If relevant, we also encourage applicants to provide evidence that the policy, program, practice, or model:

1. Is impacting student success. If including such evidence, please also articulate your definition of student success. For example, evidence of student success might include graduation rates, persistence rates, course passing rates, GPA, or other measures of student success.
2. Has resulted in organizational learning for the institution/department/unit that has encouraged rethinking other policies, programs, practices, or models.

We do not anticipate that every program, policy, model, or practice will demonstrate all the criteria above, but most of our previous winners meet multiple criteria. Each submission will be reviewed holistically with these criteria in mind. We are interested in innovations that may not follow existing best practices.

If you have questions about the criteria for the Delphi Award, please send us an email at pullias@usc.edu



The Selection Process

The Pullias Center and AAC&U invite nominations for this Award but also encourage direct applications for this Award. Nominated entities will be invited to fill out an application.

After the application deadline closes, we will convene a panel of judges familiar with faculty policies, practices and programs. The panel will review qualified applications, evaluate them against the stated criteria, and make a decision by September of the application year. At that point, the winners will be notified and asked to attend the AAC&U annual conference the following January to receive the Award.



The Fine Print

Delphi Award winners will receive \$15,000, which should be used to support ongoing implementation of the policy if in process, to expand the policy or practice, or to develop and support a new policy or practice for faculty. These funds are not a grant, there is no reporting necessary. We only ask that the funds are used toward your programs supporting your VITAL faculty.

Award recipients must make themselves available to the Delphi Project research team for interviews, questions, and additional data related to their activities. These activities will contribute to the case study that is written for each winner and posted on the Pullias Center's Delphi Project website.

The Delphi Award Advisory Board

Angel Royal – American Association of Community Colleges
Ashley Finley – Association of American Colleges and Universities
Cynthia Wilson – League of Innovation
Gayle Kiser – College and University Personnel Association for Human Resources
Jonathan Iuzzini – Achieving the Dream
Maria Maisto – New Faculty Majority
Nikki Edgecombe – Community College Research Center, Teachers College, Columbia University
Adrianna Kezar, Director, The Delphi Project on the Changing Faculty & Student Success
KC Culver, Associate Director, The Delphi Project on the Changing Faculty & Student Success

If you have questions about applying for the Delphi Award, please send us an email at pullias@usc.edu

USC Rossier
*Pullias Center for
Higher Education*

AAC&U

 **TIAA Institute**

Delphi Award 2024 Application

The Delphi Award
Award Application

Application Information

Please provide the following information for the primary contact submitting the application.

Contact first name:

Contact last name:

Contact prefix:

Contact pronouns:

Contact job title:

Contact phone:

Contact email:

Please provide the following details about your project.

Name of your group/group responsible for changes:

Group members (provide name and job title for each, separated by commas. One person per line.):

Project title:

Type(s) of institution(s) where your changes have taken place:

- Single 2-year institution
- Multiple 2-year institutions
- Single 4-year institution
- Multiple 4-year institutions
- Multiple institutions, both 2- and 4-year

Name(s) of institution(s) where your changes have taken place (one on each line, separated by commas):

Executive summary (3000 characters or less, equivalent to roughly 500 words or less.)

When were the changes you have made implemented?

So far, how many non-tenure-track faculty have been affected by the changes you have made?

What percentage of your total number of faculty have been affected by your changes? (e.g., 0-100%)

The Delphi Award

Award Application

Uploads

Please submit your description and optional appendices as one (1) PDF file.

Your description should detail the program, policy, practice, model, or other change that you have implemented to improve support for VITAL faculty (Levy, 2019). We use the term VITAL faculty – an asset-based term – to refer to contingent or non-tenure track faculty (including visiting faculty, instructors and lecturers, adjuncts, research faculty, and clinical faculty) as a way to affirm what they are, rather than what they are not.

Your description must be no more than six double-spaced pages (12-point font, 1-inch margins).

While your description may include whatever information you deem most relevant for award consideration, we encourage you to include the following information: History of the policy, program, practice, or model; Guiding principles of the policy, program, practice, or model; Stakeholders included in developing the policy, program, practice, or model; Process for developing the policy, program, practice, or model; Outcomes and/or evaluation of the policy, program, practice, or model.

Your description should also address the below award criteria by providing evidence that the policy, program, practice, or model.

1. Is designed in keeping with strategic institutional priorities, is aligned with improving campus(es) goals, and contributes to the learning mission of higher education.
2. Was enacted in partnership or with support from one or more host colleges or universities.
3. Is assisting VITAL faculty in being more effective in their work.
4. Can be scaled, replicated and/or emulated at other institutions (e.g., other institutions might be able to adopt the approach with minimum difficulty).
5. Has been designed in collaboration with the VITAL faculty that the program, policy, practice or model is aimed at.
6. Is being institutionalized and will be sustained. Evidence may entail inclusion in strategic plans, stated leadership commitment, fundraising and development aimed at supporting the practice, or other demonstrations of continuity beyond the first year of implementation.
7. Employs a theory of action that explains how the program, policy, practice, or model supports VITAL faculty, and how that support helps VITAL faculty in turn contribute to institutional priorities aligned with improving campus(es).

If relevant, we also encourage you to provide evidence that the policy, program, practice, or model.

1. Is impacting student success. If including such evidence, please also articulate your definition of student success. For example, evidence of student success might include graduation rates, persistence rates, course passing rates, GPA, or other measures of student success.
 2. Has resulted in organizational learning for the institution/department/unit that has encouraged rethinking other policies, programs, practices, or models.
- Appendices with evaluation data, other supporting data, letters of support from institutional representatives, models, figures, or other evidence related to the award criteria are optional but welcome and encouraged.

How did you find out about the Delphi Award?

You have reached the end of the application. Selecting "Next Page" below will submit the application. A confirmation email with a copy of your submitted application will also be sent to the email address you provided at the beginning of the application.

QUESTIONS

Please contact us with any questions at: pullias@usc.edu

The Delphi Award is generously funded by the TIAA Institute. The TIAA Institute helps advance the ways individuals and institutions plan for financial security and organizational effectiveness. The Institute conducts in-depth research, provides access to a network of thought leaders, and enables those it serves to anticipate trends, plan future strategies and maximize opportunities for success.