

KLEIN COLLEGE MERIT AWARD GUIDELINES for 2025-2026 Activity

During the fall semester, the Provost's office is expected to provide information about the allotment of merit units for the Klein College of Media and Communication for the 2025-2026 academic year.

Here is an overview of what you need to know about merit:

1. To be eligible for merit consideration, a full-time faculty member (i.e., tenure-track, or non-tenure-track) must have been full time for at least one semester during the 2025-2026 academic year and must have submitted the Annual Report of Faculty Achievement (AROFA) by September 1, 2026, as required by the TAUP Contract. Eligibility for merit requires that the faculty member is meeting the expected duties and responsibilities across teaching, service, and research/creative activities.
2. Merit is designed to reward contributions and efforts in teaching, service, or research/creative work that are outstanding—over and above the normal expectations for a full-time faculty member. Please understand that merit cannot and will not be assigned to everyone who applies.
3. In general, merit is not awarded for administrative duties for which a faculty member is already receiving extra compensation (e.g., a stipend or course release) to perform those duties. The faculty member can receive merit for other meritorious effort not related to those specific duties.
4. When merit is awarded to faculty members in Klein College, it is typically between 1 and 2 units of merit. Please be aware that faculty members in Klein College rarely receive more than 1 or 2 units. Further, due to possible reductions in merit units allocated to Klein College, some people may not be awarded any merit units. Not being awarded merit does not mean that you are not doing a great job. With fewer units available, fewer people will receive merit. Merit units are designed to reward outstanding performance in teaching, research or creative work, and service in a given year.

If you want to apply for merit this year, you must submit the [Klein Merit Application](#) no later than Monday, September 21, 2026.

1. Merit materials must be submitted using the [Klein Merit Application](#) form.
2. During the review process, you may be asked to submit copies of materials related to your merit request (e.g., articles, book, syllabus). Please provide these materials within 4–8 hours of the request.

University Allocation of Merit Units

The evaluation process for merit awards normally begins during the fall semester following the academic year being evaluated. Final announcements of merit awards come from the Provost's office, usually at the end of the spring semester.

It has been the practice in recent years for the University to allocate separate merit pools for tenured/tenure-track faculty and for non-tenure-track faculty. These separate pools allow evaluations to be made based on the faculty member's type of appointment. We expect merit to be separated again this year.

Merit Award Categories

Merit is an award. Merit units will be awarded for *outstanding* work – over and above what is expected as an excellent faculty member – in one or more of the areas of achievement: Teaching, Research or Creative Work, or Service. Receiving zero units does not mean you are not valued or that the work you are doing is not

important and good. Instead, merit awards are for achievements in teaching, service, and research or creative work that are well above what is expected of fulltime faculty members already performing well in their positions.

Examples of normal duties of a fulltime faculty member include attendance and participation in department meetings, Klein College faculty meetings, department award ceremonies, job candidate presentations, convocation, commencement and graduation. Attendance and participation in college and departmental events, as part of being a *good citizen*, is expected of all faculty members, and this attendance and participation is a prerequisite to being considered for an award for merit distinction.

Faculty members can be awarded merit for extraordinary work in one or more of the following categories. You must specify on the merit application form the categories for which you are applying:

Teaching

Good teaching is assumed. Good SFFs are not sufficient to be awarded merit.

Research and Creative Activity

Work considered meritorious will be awarded merit only once; typically, this means **the year** in which the work is published, presented, distributed, broadcast, or shown. Work “in process” or “in press” is not ready for merit recognition. Further, the quality of the publisher, journal, conference, etc., for research and creative work is part of the consideration for meritorious work.

Service

Outstanding service includes projects that are clearly definable and are above and beyond the service expected of faculty members in the ordinary discharge of their responsibilities. In general, faculty members who have received compensation or release time for a service responsibility should not request merit for that service.

Some examples of areas that may be considered when merit awards are determined (these examples are neither exhaustive nor restrictive):

- I. Teaching
 - A. Teaching responsibilities or innovations above and beyond normal teaching load
 - B. Above normal responsibilities advising doctoral or masters students
 - C. Significant course or curriculum development
- II. Research or Creative Work
 - A. Publications
 1. Books
 2. Articles
 3. Book chapters
 - B. Invited speeches at prestigious venues
 - C. Creative work presented at international events
 - D. Grants
 - E. Research-oriented or creative honors
- III. Distinguished service to the department, university, discipline, or exercise of professional expertise to the community

IV. Significant contribution of expertise to media appearances as a form of community service

Merit Process

The process for determining merit awards is in keeping with the TAUP contract. Each year, the college is awarded a number of merit units by the provost's office. This number is based on the number of full-time faculty members that the college employed in the academic year being evaluated. The college sets aside up to 15% of these units from the pool for the Dean to use in adjusting the merit awards recommended by the department chairs or merit committee. When the units available for merit awards are separated by tenured or tenure-track faculty and non-tenure-track faculty, as it has been for the past two years, the Dean's office may take a percentage from each group.

Department Chairs. The department chairs meet together to deliberate and review all eligible full-time faculty members from across the Klein College of Media and Communication who have submitted a merit application for review; they also may use the AROFAs and SFFs when completing their evaluation.

When awarding merit, half units (0.5) may be awarded to a faculty member only after one full unit has been awarded in at least one of the three categories. Total allocations of one half point are not accepted. The department chairs will provide a written report to the Dean and the Klein College Merit Advisory Committee about each eligible faculty member, the number of merit units recommended in each of the three categories, and a justification for the award recommendations.

After the chairs meet, each chair will inform the faculty members in their department of the total number of merit units that were recommended to the dean for each faculty member that applied for merit.

Klein College Merit Advisory Committee. According to the Klein College bylaws, the Klein College Merit Advisory Committee comprises four members: The Dean appoints two tenured faculty members from among the faculty members currently serving on the Klein College Personnel Committee, and two non-tenure-track faculty members are elected from the fulltime faculty. These four faculty members should represent each of the departments in the college. Department chairs are not permitted to serve on the Merit Advisory Committee. The Klein College Merit Advisory Committee review the recommendations for merit made by the department chairs.

The Dean. The Dean shall review the merit recommendations from the department chairs and from the Klein College Merit Advisory Committee and shall prepare a written report that provides a list that includes all faculty members eligible for merit awards, the number of merit units recommended to be awarded in each of the three categories, and a justification for the awards. Each faculty member recommended for merit by the Dean shall be notified of the Dean's recommendation at the time the recommendation is certified by the Provost's office, which is often late in the spring semester. If faculty members were recommended for merit awards by the department chairs but not by the Dean, they will also receive a letter of notification.

The list of faculty members recommended for merit awards and the amount of each merit award recommended shall be forwarded to the Provost or other designated University officer for review and final decision. Faculty members who have been awarded merit shall be informed of the number of merit units and the reasons for which merit is awarded by the Provost or other designated University officer, usually no later than May 1.

Decisions on the awarding of merit pay by the Provost or other designated University officer shall not be subject to grievance or arbitration.