

Call for Nominations for the Michael A. Olivas Award

Award Description:

This award serves as a living memorial to Professor Michael A. Olivas, who died in April 2022 after an illustrious career in law, most recently as William B. Bates Distinguished Chair in Law Emeritus at the University of Houston, and the Director of the University of Houston's Institute for Higher Education Law & Governance.

Professor Olivas was awarded the 2019 AALS Triennial Award for Lifetime Service to Legal Education and the Law. He was an elected member of the American Law Institute and the National Academy of Education. He served as General Counsel to the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) and chaired the AALS Sections on Education Law and Immigration Law, and countless committees. Professor Olivas served as President of the Association of American Law Schools, as a member of the AALS Executive Committee, and as Interim President of University of Houston-Downtown. He was a renowned scholar and teacher as well as an administrative leader and community servant.

What Professor Olivas is most remembered for, however, is for his legendary dedication to cultivating and mentoring minority and women faculty aspirants and junior faculty, for his outspoken and effective leadership in diversifying the legal academy and profession, and by giving voice to the voiceless and speaking truth to power all while achieving excellence in teaching and scholarship.

The Michael A. Olivas Award for Outstanding Leadership in Diversity and Mentoring in the Legal Academy will be awarded to an AALS faculty member who most vividly exemplifies Professor Olivas's devotion to mentoring and diversity. The recipient will be a faculty member with an outstanding record of mentoring junior and aspirant faculty from underrepresented communities and other work promoting diversity, inclusion, and equity in the legal academy.

Requirements and Eligibility:

- Nomination deadline is **Friday, October 17, 2025, 3:00 AM EST.**
- Nominations can come from any source (including students).
- Nominees must be members of the faculty (including in administration) of an AALS-member law school. Award eligibility open to senior members of the legal academy (10 or more years beyond their initial academic appointment), and inclusive of administrators, senior faculty (with tenure and tenure-like security of position, adjunct, or emeriti status), and other senior members of the legal academy.
- The prevailing nominee should be the colleague who best exemplifies the values and work vivified by Professor Michael A. Olivas: *i.e.*, an extraordinary dedication to cultivating and mentoring minority and women faculty aspirants and junior faculty, an exceptional record of diversifying the academy, a recognized commitment to serving the community by giving voice to the voiceless, and all while achieving excellence in teaching and scholarship.
- Unsuccessful nominations may be revived in subsequent years by their respective nominators, either with a resubmission of the same nomination letter alone or by means of an updated recitation of accomplishments with the prior nomination letter attached.

- The honoree will be celebrated by means of a national media release from the AALS, and at a public presentation of the award at a plenary session of the AALS Annual Meeting. When possible, the nominator will have a role in presenting the award.
- The award will be memorialized in the form of a wall or desktop plaque, certificate, or another suitable artifact.
- Nomination letters must address how the nominee carries on Professor Olivas's legacy of extraordinary mentoring of minoritized and underrepresented junior and aspirant faculty colleagues, and impactful work towards diversifying the legal academy.
- Include the nominee's CV
- Nomination letters (of no more than five pages) may be accompanied by no more than three letters of support.

Submit Nominations Here: <https://aalsweb.wufoo.com/forms/p6jd2mx1w5q0hn/>.

Selection Committee:

The Michael A. Olivas Award Selection Committee will be comprised of the Chair of the Section on Civil Rights; Chair of the Section on Education Law; Chair of the Section on Immigration Law; Chair of the Section on Minority Groups; and Chair of the Section on Student Services

If you have issues submitting, please contact AALS Section Services Manager, Shannon Leonard at sleonard@aals.org