GPILS/OPS Award Descriptions

1. Nominees for the following four awards are to be submitted by Program Directors. Each Program Director should contact their faculty and ask for potential nominees, and then work with their governing committee to select an appropriate student to nominate for each award.

**MS Scholar Award**
Each GPILS MS program is invited to nominate one student for this award. This award is intended to recognize a student who has demonstrated an outstanding record of academic performance and has shown great potential as a scientist. In addition to the nomination letter, two support letters are requested. These letters may come from any faculty member, but letters from individuals who have served as a mentor, course director, or member of the student's thesis committee (if applicable) are strongly recommended. The following items are required by the committee:

- A nomination letter from the GPILS MS Program Director
- Two letters of support from faculty members
- A curriculum vitae including the student's GPA

Note: Nominees for this award may not have previously earned a higher degree. (e.g., PhD, MD, etc.).

**PhD Scholar Award**
Each program is invited to nominate one person for this award. This award is intended to recognize a student who is within his/her first three years of study and research. The student should have an outstanding academic performance record and show great potential as a scientist. In addition to the nomination letter, two support letters are requested. These letters may come from any faculty member, but letters from the Program Director, a course director, or member of the student's thesis committee are strongly recommended. The following items are required by the committee:

- A nomination letter from the student's mentor
- Two letters of support from faculty members
- A curriculum vitae including the student's GPA

**PhD Thesis Project Award**
We invite each program to nominate one person for this award. Nominations for this award are limited to students who have successfully defended their dissertation between May 2019 and August 2020 or who will defend before the end of the Fall 2020 semester (December 23). The letters of recommendation should focus on a description of the significance of the work in the specific field of study. The following items are required by the committee:

- A nomination letter from the student's mentor
- A letter of support from a faculty member
- A curriculum vitae
- An abstract, maximum of 500 words, summarizing the overall dissertation project
The Otani Award

The Otani Award commemorates Elaine Miye Otani. She was a student who stood for hard work and perseverance with an intense interest in her field of study. She was especially interested in the mechanisms of cellular differentiation and carcinogenesis. Yet she found time to spread her friendship and goodwill among those around her, trying at the same time to inspire them in their studies. Her family established this living memorial as a tribute to her and her aspirations.

This award will be given annually to a graduate student of outstanding character who demonstrates superior academic performance and who shows outstanding promise to develop into a resourceful independent investigator. The student must have a consistent record of service and support to the overall goals of GPILS by stimulating interest in and attempting to improve the quality of academic studies among fellow students in GPILS. The recipient of this award must show evidence of a good working relationship with peers and GPILS faculty and have earned the esteem of others. Nominees for the Otani Award must have successfully passed their Program's Qualifying Examination. Only one nomination packet should be submitted per GPILS program and must include:

- A nomination letter from the GPILS Program Director explaining why the student is being nominated
- A letter from the nominee's faculty mentor or another appropriate faculty member
- A curriculum vitae including the student's GPA

2. Nominees for the following award should be submitted by the mentor(s):

Postdoctoral Fellow Excellence in Research Award

This award was created to honor a Postdoctoral Fellow who shows an outstanding record of research performance, professional development, and an exceptional record of accomplishments. There is no limit to the number of nominations that we will accept for this award. The supporting letters should address the significance of the nominee's work in the context of the specific discipline and science in general. The nomination packet must include:

- A nomination letter from the mentor
- A letter of support from a faculty member
- A curriculum vitae
- An abstract, maximum of 500 words, summarizing the overall work and its significance in the field

3. Nominees for the following two awards should be submitted by faculty members, postdoctoral fellows, graduate students, or staff members:

Postdoctoral Fellow Excellence in Service Award

In recognition of the University’s commitment to our core values and community engagement, this award was created to honor a Postdoctoral Fellow of outstanding character who demonstrates consistent record of service and support to the School of Medicine or the community, outside of the laboratory. The recipient of this award must show evidence of a good working relationship with peers and faculty and have earned the esteem of others. There is no limit to the number of nominations that we will accept for this award. The nomination packet must include:

- Two letters from a faculty member, postdoctoral fellow, staff member, graduate student, or representative of a service organization highlighting why the postdoctoral fellow is being nominated for his/her service specifically
- A curriculum vitae highlighting the candidate’s service record
Postdoctoral Fellow Excellence in Mentorship Award
This award is created to honor a Postdoctoral Fellow who shows an outstanding record of supportive mentorship in a laboratory during their time at the School of Medicine. There is no limit to the number of nominations that we will accept for this award. The nomination packet must include:

- Nomination letter from a mentee of the candidate. Letters should include stories from mentees who value their postdoctoral fellows for their expertise, patience, availability, creativity, kindness, and the investments each of them makes in their commitment to training the next generation of researchers. In particular, letters should describe the frequency of the interactions with mentees, the length of the relationships with mentees, and the importance of their impact on the mentee's professional or educational success.
- An additional letter of support from a faculty member, a postdoctoral fellow, a graduate student, staff member, or an additional mentee
- A curriculum vitae highlighting the candidate’s mentorship activity

4. Nominees for the following award should be submitted by Postdoctoral Fellows:

Faculty Excellence in Postdoctoral Mentorship Award
The faculty nominee must have a record of supportive mentorship. There is no limit to the number of nominations that we will accept for this award. The nomination packet must include:

- Nomination letters from two Postdoctoral Fellows who have been mentored by the candidate
- A curriculum vitae including a list of current and past postdocs (and, if known, the current position of past postdocs)

5. Nominees for the following award should be submitted by faculty members and/or graduate students:

Teacher of the Year Award
The nominee must be a member of the UMB Graduate Faculty and at least one of the GPILS graduate programs. The nomination packet must include:

- A nomination letter from a faculty member and two separate letters from individual graduate students OR three separate letters from individual graduate students
- A curriculum vitae with detailed information on previous and current teaching activities, and if possible, a teaching portfolio with student evaluations

6. Nominees for the following award should be submitted by faculty members:

GPILS Alumnus Award
The nominee must be an alumnus of the Graduate Program in Life Sciences or graduate programs that predated the creation of GPILS (e.g., Program in Physiology, etc.). This award is meant to honor the exceptional achievements of an alum of a School of Medicine PhD or MD/PhD program. The nominating packet must include:

- A nomination letter from a faculty member that outlines the nominee's accomplishments
- The candidate's curriculum vitae

Note: For a nominee to be considered five years must have passed since she or he was awarded the MS, PhD, MD/PhD, or DDS/PhD degree from UMB.
7. Nominees for the following award should be submitted by graduate students:

The Dr. Mark E. Shirtliff PhD Student Mentor Award

This is a new award created in honor of Mark E. Shirtliff, PhD, former Professor in the School of Dentistry, Department of Microbial Pathogenesis and School of Medicine, Department of Microbiology & Immunology. The nominee must have a record of supportive graduate student mentorship. There is no limit to the number of nominations that we will accept for this award. The nomination packet must include:

- Two separate nomination letters from individual students who have been mentored by the candidate
- The candidate’s curriculum vitae including a list of current and past students (and, if known, the current position of past students)