



National
University
System

A Private Nonprofit Educational
System Serving the Public Good



National University System Launches Search for Nation's 50 Top Inspiring Teachers Through the \$500,000 Sanford Teacher Awards

One PreK-12 teacher in each state will be recognized for creating inspirational and harmonious classrooms that advance student development and achievement; The awards, supported by philanthropist T. Denny Sanford, reflect the mission of the Sanford Harmony and Sanford Inspire programs

Sept. 24, 2018 – San Diego, CA – In recognition of teachers who inspire students to achieve their greatest potential, National University System has launched the [Sanford Teacher Award](#), a half-million dollar award campaign to honor 50 of the nation's top inspiring PreK-12 teachers. The first-of-its-kind Sanford Teacher Award seeks to recognize the value of inspiring teachers nationwide by recognizing educators for their dedication to creating inspirational and harmonious classrooms that support student development and achievement. The Sanford Teacher Award will award the top inspirational teacher in each state with \$10,000, with the exception of one top teacher who will be named a national winner and receive a grand award of \$50,000.

To celebrate the Sanford Teacher Award launch, five remarkable educators who have been identified as representing the key characteristics of inspiring teaching are being recognized throughout the country as inaugural recipients of the Sanford Teacher Award. These five inaugural Award recipients will be announced in upcoming weeks as part of the campaign's ongoing teacher outreach activities through the Oct. 22 award submission deadline. The first Inaugural Sanford Teacher Award is being presented to Rafaela Campos, an early childhood educator with the Los Angeles Unified School District. Other recipients of this special Inaugural recognition will be named in upcoming weeks in San Diego, Dallas, Clark County (Nev.) and New York City.

The five will support efforts in raising awareness of the national Sanford Teacher Awards competition, leading up to the announcement of the 50 winners in November. The Sanford Teacher Award also celebrates the commitment of philanthropist T. Denny Sanford, who is the visionary behind two research-based pre-college programs that are being expanded nationally through the leadership of the private, nonprofit National University System: Sanford Harmony is a PreK-6 social emotional learning program that helps children develop communication and collaboration skills, and the PreK-12 Sanford Inspire offers teachers research-based resources and lessons to create inspiring classroom experiences.

"There is no higher calling than being a teacher, and as the teacher workforce is under heavy demands, it is important to provide educators ongoing support that inspires them in their classrooms," said Dr. Michael R. Cunningham, Chancellor of the National University System, a

network of nonprofit education institutions that serve lifelong learners from PreK to graduate level. “We are honored to collaborate with Denny Sanford on the national expansion of the Sanford Programs and we congratulate the inaugural five recipients for their commitment to creating meaningful learning experiences for their students.”

The Sanford Teacher Awards are part of the national expansion efforts of the three Sanford Programs, which also includes a nationwide network of institutes anchored by the Sanford Institute of Philanthropy at National University that offers training programs for front-line nonprofit fundraisers. All three programs are based on the vision of Mr. Sanford, who has donated about \$130 million toward their national expansion effort led by the San Diego-based National University System – an effort that involves the collaboration of universities around the country that share a similar focus and dedication to the professional support of educators and the nonprofit sector. To date, more than 3 million people have been impacted by the three programs.

As the nation faces an increasing teacher shortage exacerbated by teacher retention challenges, the PreK-12 [Sanford Inspire](#) offers a toolkit of research-based teaching methodologies, and on-demand, self-guided modules that are accessible online to help teachers create inspiring classroom environments. The Sanford College of Education at National University, which is part of the National University System, is also a leader among a growing number of universities that have integrated Inspire principles into their teacher education curriculum. [Sanford Harmony](#) is a PreK-6 research-based social-emotional learning program that cultivates strong classroom relationships between all students. Sanford Harmony has been recognized by the Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning (CASEL) as a quality program, and is being used in the nation’s largest school districts by teachers who appreciate its easy-to-integrate lessons, activity cards and story books that encourage students to develop empathy, communication skills, and positive peer relationships by learning how to collaborate and look beyond perceived differences.

“As a child, I was fortunate to have a few teachers who truly inspired me to learn and succeed. Educators have many similar opportunities to touch children’s lives and make meaningful impacts that can last a lifetime,” said Mr. Sanford. “As an entrepreneur and philanthropist, I can think of no better return on investment than inspiring students to embrace learning and find their path in life.”

The criteria for selecting the 50 winners is based on the following characteristics of inspiring teaching: Enthusiasm for teaching; empathy and warmth towards all students; fosters positive relationships with all students; creates a positive learning environment; and recognizes student strengths. The finalists’ nominations form will be reviewed by a selection committee based at National University in La Jolla, California.

To learn more about learn more about the Sanford Teacher Award and nominate an inspirational teacher, visit the [Sanford Teacher Award page](#).

###

About the National University System

The National University System is a network of accredited nonprofit education institutions serving higher education and K-12 students that includes National University, John F. Kennedy University, City University of Seattle, and the Division of Pre-College Programs. Established in 2001 to meet the emerging challenges and demands of education in the 21st Century, the network's complementary universities offer pathways for students to attain professional and terminal degrees through quality and innovative programs delivered in a format that is flexible to the needs of adult learners. The anchor institution, [National University](#), was founded in 1971 and is among the largest private, nonprofit institutions of higher education in California with more than 150,000 alumni. For more information on the National University System: <https://www.nusystem.org>.

About the Sanford Education Center and Sanford College of Education at National University

The Sanford Education Center at National University was established in 2014 through the generous support of philanthropist T. Denny Sanford to provide innovative programs in the nonprofit and PreK-12 sectors. The Center, in coordination with universities around the country, is leading the national expansion of three initiatives: Sanford Harmony, Sanford Inspire and the Sanford Institute of Philanthropy. The Center's initiatives are supported by the National University System, National University, and the University's [Sanford College of Education](#), which is named after Mr. Sanford in recognition of his role in developing and supporting programs that promote prosocial behavior among children. The College is among the Top Ten largest schools of education in the country and prepares more teachers than any other university in the state of California. Learn more: sanfordprograms.org