



**THE AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF HISPANICS IN HIGHER EDUCATION (AAHHE)
AND TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY-CORPUS CHRISTI (TAMUCC)
OUTSTANDING THESIS IN FOOD AND AGRICULTURAL SCIENCES
COMPETITION 2016**

Guidelines

The following guidelines and accompanying explanations are provided to ensure objectivity and the highest possible standards for the Thesis Competition.

1. Who is eligible to enter the competition?

The competition is open to any Hispanic (must be a U.S. Citizen or U.S. Permanent Resident) individual who has completed a thesis that focuses on the Food and the Agricultural Sciences between December 2013 and August 30, 2015.

Theses are eligible if they are in domains that are related to the USDA priority areas, including Food Safety, Climate Change, Sustainable Energy, Childhood Obesity, or Global Food Security and Hunger. Theses in the humanities or social sciences are not eligible.

Completion is defined as:

- (a) received the master's degree between the specified dates **OR**
- (b) satisfactorily completed all the course work and the thesis between the dates specified and the thesis are acceptable to the candidate's committee, but the degree has not been conferred.

A routine check is made with the chair of the thesis committee of the applicant to protect all competitors, the universities, the American Association of Hispanics in Higher Education, USDA NIFA, and Texas A&M University—Corpus Christi.

Studies using any research approach (historical, experimental, survey, etc.) are eligible.

2. What are the criteria used in evaluating the theses?

The following criteria will be used to evaluate the theses:

- (a) The conceptualization of inquiry and focus; creativity and innovation;
- (b) The appropriateness of the research design, approach and data analysis;
- (c) The discussion of findings focused on comprehension and integration;
- (d) The significance of its contribution to knowledge in the field: discussion of findings, implications and contributions to the discipline;

- (e) The scholarly quality of the thesis focused on the writing, literature review and bibliography (current and appropriateness to the study).

3. What is the deadline for the competition?

August 31, 2015 5 p.m. CST Applicants submit via, PDF or Word format, a copy of thesis to the chair of the theses competition

Dr. JoAnn Canales: joann.canales@tamucc.edu
Subject heading: 2016 Thesis Competition

4. How should the thesis be submitted?

- (1) **Title page** – A blank title page is attached to these guidelines. Please provide all the information requested. One page in length.
- (2) **Letter** – A letter, on university stationery and signed by the chair of the thesis committee, must indicate how the thesis a) meets the eligibility criteria, defined earlier in these guidelines, detail is essential; b) would be ranked among previous theses chaired; meets the evaluation criteria listed above.
- (3) **Summary** – On a separate page, include a summary, **approximately 150 words in length**, stating in non-technical terms, the purpose and major findings of the study. Double-spaced and one page in length.
- (4) **Thesis**

5. How many copies of the thesis are required?

An electronic copy of the thesis should be sent via PDF or Word format to:

Dr. JoAnn Canales
joann.canales@tamucc.edu
Subject heading: 2016 Thesis Competition

6. What are the most important dates and deadlines?

The schedule below, in addition to providing important dates and deadlines, provides additional information about the process.

August 31, 2015 Applicants submit, via PDF or Word format, a thesis to the chair of the theses competition, Dr. JoAnn Canales, joann.canales@tamucc.edu.
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September 7-11, 2015 Panel of Judges reviews and selects the top three (3) theses.

September 15, 2015	Chair of the competition notifies three (3) finalists, as well as the others not selected, of results.
March 10-12, 2016	Finalists attend the eleventh annual national conference of the American Association of Hispanics in Higher Education in Costa Mesa, California.
March 12, 2016	The outstanding theses competition winners for 2016 are announced at the awards banquet at the eleventh annual national conference of the American Association of Hispanics in Higher Education in Costa Mesa, California
April 1, 2016	Announcement will be posted on the website of both AAHHE, TAMUCC, and USDA. Announcements will be advertised in the <i>Journal of Hispanic Higher Education</i> , <i>Hispanic Outlook of Higher Education</i> and other journals. USDA will announce the results of the competition to its constituencies.

7. What recognition will be given to the winners?

The three (3) finalists will be recognized formally at the annual awards breakfast during AAHHE's **eleventh** annual conference in Costa Mesa, California March 12, 2016. Conference registration costs and travel expenses within the continental United States, to include hotel room for three (2) nights will be paid for the participants.

The first place winner will receive an award of \$3,000. The second place winner will receive an award of \$2,000, and the third place winner will receive an award of \$1,000. All three finalists will receive an AAHHE/TAMUCC/USDA-NIFA plaque.

The three finalists will also present their theses in individual concurrent sessions at the conference and be invited to submit to the *Journal of Hispanic Higher Education*, an academic article based on the thesis.

8. Who makes the final decision?

All decisions by the Panel of Judges are final.

Additional details about all aspects of the competition are online in the Outstanding Thesis Competition 2016 Guidelines at www.aahhe.org or <http://gradschool.tamucc.edu/index.html>
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