



TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY

Davis College

Plant & Soil Science™

May 13, 2024

Dear Selection Committee,

This letter is offered as formal nomination for Dr. Alicia Thomas for the Davis College Instructor Award. Alicia is an Assistant Professor of Practice (previously a lecturer for five years) in the Department of Plant and Soil Science, and she and Dr. Vikram Baliga spearhead our PSS 1411 series. As shown in her teaching record, Dr. Thomas is renowned for both the quantity and quality of her teaching: **she taught more than 1000 students in 59 course sections during the past five years, and her average evaluation scores were 4.68. She also oversaw lab sections totaling more than 2000 students during the same period.** Dr. Thomas is a leader in teaching and advising undergraduate students in PSS and Davis College, and I wholeheartedly recommend her for this honor.

I will briefly share some **2023** stats for Dr. Thomas and then describe what she has accomplished in a more meaningful way:

Stats:

- #1 in PSS in 2023 in total students taught (357)
- #1 in students advised (55)
- Taught 8 course and lab sections, 4 at-a-distance

While these statistics are impressive, the true value Dr. Thomas brings to our department is her passion for teaching and for the students who venture into our introductory horticulture classes. Many of these students have one interaction with the Davis College during their time at Texas Tech: PSS 1411. Alicia and Vikram have revamped the classes, labs, reference materials, and assignments for PSS 1411 to encourage student learning outcomes and success. Some examples of student evaluations reinforce this:

- “This was a very fun course to take part in. It was very different to me which made it more interesting. The professor herself was such a wonderful person. Her kindness stood out to me so much that I have suggested my friends take her course as well.”
- “I have never had a green thumb before, but this lab makes me want to go plant a garden or buy lots and lots of plants and see if I can keep them alive. I also LOVED the hydroponics portion of this course!”

For these reasons, I highly recommend Dr. Alicia Thomas for the Davis College Instructor Award. If you have any questions about this letter or her abilities or accomplishments, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Respectfully,

Glen L. Ritchie, Ph.D.

Chair, Department of Plant and Soil Science