



2026 TERRY FOUNDATION ALUMNI SPEAKER GUIDELINES

1. Goal

Banquet speeches should **inspire and motivate** our Scholars. Speeches should appeal to a general audience of students at all levels (freshmen through senior) and many different majors. Fellow Terry Alumni and university guests will also be in attendance. Please note that the **virtual event on November 5th will have an audience that is all Terry Alumni**. The speaker at that event should still plan to deliver a motivational, inspiring speech, but the audience composition should be considered.

To accommodate the diverse crowd at each event, we request that speeches not be political or religious in nature.

2. Length of Speech

To keep our program on schedule, Alumni speakers should limit their speeches to **10 -15 minutes**.

3. Annual Theme

The theme for this year's Terry Banquet speeches is "Success and Failure."

We have each experienced the elation and satisfaction of succeeding as well as the disappointment and doubt when we believe we have failed. The Terry Foundation frequently shares Howard Terry's quote about success: *"Success is the accomplishment of goals you set for yourself in life..."*

This statement should remind every Terry Scholar that success looks different for everyone. It should also remind us that "failure" is perceived differently by everyone as well. What would you tell fellow Terry Scholars, especially students, about "Success and Failure?" What lesson(s) should they take away?

We have provided some topic prompts to help you plan your speech proposal.

- A. How do you approach setting goals to attain your version of success while giving yourself the flexibility to adjust over time as you grow? Share a "success" you are particularly proud of and why it is important to you. What about a "failure" that is also an important part of your story?
- B. Have you navigated pressure to demonstrate or maintain the appearance of success, especially in today's social media culture, while having an internal perception of failure? How did you handle it? How do we benefit when we show vulnerability and allow others to see our authentic selves?
- C. How often is "failure" truly failure instead of an opportunity for redirection? Describe a time when a "failure" created a path that you previously did not have the opportunity or courage to pursue. What would you have initially told yourself when you felt like you had failed?
- D. How has your community supported you to achieve success and offered you redirection when you believe you have failed? How can sharing about our failures within the Terry Community enhance our opportunities for authentic connection?

E. What would you tell your Terry Interview Panel and/or Mr. Terry about the way you have used the opportunities provided by the Terry Scholarship to pursue your version of success? What have you learned along the way?

4. **Required Speech Proposal**

All potential speakers must present a speech proposal to the Foundation when they complete the sign-up form. All speech proposals must contain the following:

- **File saved with your first name and last name in the title** (*Microsoft Word Document or PDF*)
- **Your name, Terry school, and Terry year at the top of the page**
- **A brief paragraph or outline of your speech's main idea and why you chose your topic**
*Your speech does **not** have to be completely finalized by the time you complete the sign-up form, but The Foundation needs a clear idea of what you intend to share if you are selected as a speaker. If you are one of the finalists being considered, the Foundation will contact you for a more detailed outline.*

5. **Travel**

We do not want travel costs to prohibit participation. Travel reimbursement up to a maximum stipend of \$350 will be available upon request. If needed, a hotel room will be provided at the same location where Terry staff stay for the event.

6. **Placement at the Events**

At Banquets, Alumni speakers have the option to be seated at the head table or with a table of Terry students for dinner. After dinner, the program will include remarks by Foundation board members, university representatives, and students. The Alumni speaker will then be introduced as the principal speaker of the evening. After the speech, a representative from the Foundation will conclude the program.

At the Virtual Alumni Gathering, the Alumni speaker will join the Foundation staff a few minutes early to ensure clear audio and video. The program will begin with remarks from the Foundation followed by an introduction of the speaker. After the speech, attendees will disperse into randomly assigned breakout rooms to meet other Terrys from across the country. The speaker will be assigned to a room and may participate in the social aspects of the evening with everyone else.

THINGS TO CONSIDER

Our Terry Scholar community is very diverse, with students and alumni from different areas of Texas, different backgrounds (race, religion, ethnicity, gender identity, etc.) and varying kinds of support systems.

Speakers should consider how their speech topic and remarks will be received by Scholars from all backgrounds and aim to be inclusive.

Focus on the characteristics that all Terry Scholars have in common based on our selection process, which has resulted in a diverse background of highly driven and talented individuals who needed help to attain a debt-free college education and accomplish their goals.

SPEAKER RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION TIMELINE

July 29th

Banquet Speaker Information Session on Zoom

August 3rd – August 31st

Terry Alumni invited to submit their speaker proposals.

September 1st – September 4th

The Foundation will contact potential speakers to request additional details and confirm speakers for their banquets. **Goal: all Alumni speakers confirmed by September 9th.**

September 10th Onward

The Foundation will work with each speaker to finalize their presentation and travel itinerary. Speakers will also be asked to submit a speaker bio to be read as an introduction. The Virtual Gathering Speaker will also be requested to submit a recording of their speech as a contingency option.

All arrangements should be finalized no later than one week before the speaker's event.

FALL 2026 BANQUET SCHEDULE

Monday, September 28th – UT Dallas (Richardson, TX)

Tuesday, September 29th – Texas Tech University (Lubbock, TX)

Monday, October 5th – UT San Antonio (San Antonio, TX)

Tuesday, October 6th – Texas State University (San Marcos, TX)

Thursday, October 8th – University of Houston (Houston, TX)

Tuesday, October 13th – Texas A&M University (College Station, TX)

Thursday, October 15th – UT El Paso (El Paso, TX)

Monday, October 19th – UT Austin (Austin, TX)

Monday, October 26th – UT Arlington (Arlington, TX)

Tuesday, October 27th – Texas Woman's University (Denton, TX)

Wednesday, October 28th – University of North Texas (Denton, TX)

Thursday, November 5th – Fall Virtual Alumni Gathering (Zoom) **Please note that this is an Alumni audience.**