

Professor Michael Twohig Receives Double Honors at the 2025 Faculty Awards Ceremony

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Professor Michael Twohig at the 2025 Faculty Awards Ceremony

Michael Twohig, USU professor of psychology and licensed clinical psychologist in the Emma Eccles Jones College of Education and Human Services (CEHS), received two of the prized faculty awards, the D. Wynne Thorne Career Research Award and the Outstanding Graduate Mentor of the Year, at the annual USU Faculty Awards event in March. The Office of Research and the Office of the Executive Vice President and Provost hosted the 2025 Faculty Awards Ceremony, which recognizes the research, service, and teaching efforts of Utah State University faculty.

The recent ceremony was the first ever Faculty Awards event in which an awardee received two awards in the same year. The D. Wynne Thorne Career Research Award recognizes individuals who have completed outstanding research throughout their university careers and is the highest research honor an individual can receive. Of note, Twohig joins four exceptional researchers in CEHS who have been awarded the prestigious Thorne Career Research Award in the past eight years. Twohig also received recognition as the 2025 Outstanding Graduate Mentor of the Year. This award recognizes USU mentors for their outstanding efforts helping their graduate students prepare for their professional careers.

“We are thrilled that Utah State University has recognized Dr. Mike Twohig as the 2025 Graduate Research Mentor of the Year and the recipient of the D. Wynne Thorne Career Research Award,” said Shawn Whiteman, interim

dean of CEHS. “These awards highlight Dr. Twohig’s dedication to excellence in research and mentorship, exemplifying core values of our college, and he serves as an inspiration for all. We are incredibly proud of Dr. Twohig and all our 2025 college awardees as nominees.”

Twohig co-created the Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) Research Group with Professor Michael Levin, in which they collaborate with researchers across the United States and the world to develop, research, and disseminate ACT interventions for a wide range of populations through in-person and online platforms. ACT is a form of psychotherapy that uses acceptance, mindfulness, and values-based strategies to promote mental health and wellbeing. Their research focuses on the use of ACT across a variety of clinical presentations, with an emphasis on obsessive compulsive and related disorders such as trichotillomania (compulsive hair pulling). Twohig’s work on ACT for obsessive-compulsive and related disorders has changed how those disorders are treated. In 2022 and 2024, he was rated the most productive author on ACT in the world, and USU was recognized as the most productive institution for ACT research.

Scott Bates, department head of psychology at USU, praised Twohig’s extensive research efforts. “Dr. Twohig’s groundbreaking research has dramatically transformed the treatment of various mental health disorders,” Bates said. “He has also helped spread a cutting-edge, innovative treatment approach called Acceptance and Commitment Therapy worldwide. Dr. Twohig is also an extraordinarily prolific scholar. He has published a few hundred journal articles, nearly fifty book chapters entries, and more than a dozen books in his career. Dr. Twohig is a role model for the discipline of psychology. He truly deserves USU’s highest honor in research, the D. Wynne Thorne Career Research Award as well as the Outstanding Graduate Mentor of the Year award.”

Twohig’s prestigious research attracts numerous skilled graduate students to his program. In addition to mentoring graduate students in ACT research,



Twohig mentors graduate students in doctoral programs in psychology and

audiology. And his mentorship has been proved impactful. He has been the primary mentor for 17 Ph.D. students and has co-mentored another seven Ph.D. students and 24 M.Ed. students with collaborators at USU. In six of the past 10 years, he has mentored or co-mentored the Emma Eccles Jones College of Education and Human Services Graduate Researcher of the Year. He also mentored the University Graduate Researcher of the Year for 2025.

Twohig received his bachelor's and master's degrees from the University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee. He received his Ph.D. from the University of Nevada, Reno, and completed his clinical internship at the University of British Columbia Hospital. He is also past president of the Association of Contextual Behavioral Science.

“Winning two university awards in one cycle was a lot to take in,” said Twohig. “It meant so much to me that my graduate students experience their time with me as being that positive. I’m proud of all my students and what they’re accomplishing.”

Regarding the D. Wynne Thornton Research Award, Twohig said he was very humbled to receive it. “I am grateful that USU recognizes the amazing work we’re doing in our laboratory. I appreciate the support I have received from friends and family, USU, the donors—including the Huntsman Family Foundation—and the private and federal granting agencies. Our group works hard to make a difference in the mental healthcare that people receive, and it means a lot to be recognized.”