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TO: Academic Senate

FROM: Mike Geringer, Chair, Distinguished Teaching Award Committee

RE: Report for Fall Quarter, 2009, of the Distinguished Teaching Awards Committee of the Academic Senate

After preparing a slightly modified process for the DTA for 2009-2010, Chair Geringer submitted a proposal to the Executive Committee for its approval. Chair Geringer then met with the Executive Committee at its 22 September meeting and had the process approved at that time. He will work with the Executive Committee in Winter 2010 to address any concerns about the process and make any needed changes, and then obtain approval for a “permanent” process and criteria to govern the committee’s activities.

The bulk of the DTA committee’s work happens in Winter and Spring quarters, so we met once during fall quarter, on Thursday, 1 October, 2009. The focus of this initial meeting was to have members meet each other, introduce new members to the committee and its process, and come to agreement on the process for the committee’s work this year.

At the committee meeting, members were introduced and the mandate of the committee was discussed. The members reviewed the DTA process, both historically and as proposed for the 2009-2010 academic year. We agreed to again have a 6-week nomination process (October 26-December 4), with all nominations being made electronically. We agreed to accept all nominations from qualified nominators (current and past students), even if some requested information was missing from the nomination materials, in order to increase the data available for our deliberations. We agreed on elements of an advertisement process to enhance broad exposure for the award. Committee Chair Geringer and Academic Senate Administrative Assistant Gladys Gregory subsequently collaborated to ensure that electronic, print and other agreed modes of promotion were implemented in an effective and timely manner. Geringer circulated a revised letter to be sent to DTA finalists in January. DTA committee members reviewed and commented on these drafts and they are now prepared for use subsequent to our meeting to select Finalists, tentatively scheduled for Friday of the first week of Winter quarter. The committee also agreed on a basic process for the remainder of the DTA nomination, review, and recommendation activities. A description of the Committee’s criteria and process has now been posted to the Academic Senate’s website. Subsequent to the meeting, a second ASI representative has been added to the committee, making an overall committee of 8 members. Five of these members have previously served on the DTA, so there should be a stronger base of support to assist the new committee members.

Regarding committee composition and process, the participation of students on the committee remains a promising enhancement. In the recent past, it had proven difficult to obtain willing, participating student volunteers to serve on the committee. However, we had a generally positive experience with two outstanding representatives of ASI each year since 2004-2005, and we look forward to the participation of two more students in this year's process. It appears that priority registration status is helping to attract and retain good students for this time-consuming committee (the time commitment in Winter and Spring quarters for observations of award finalists and meetings involves a minimum of 30 to 40 hours of time committed to this process). The input of the students has been highly valuable, and their role is particularly appropriate in this student-nominated award for teaching excellence.

The committee has been charged with reviewing the process and criteria employed in its activities, and working with the Senate's Executive Committee to approve the process. Due to the nature of 5 of 8 members being experienced with the process, it has been decided that discussion of process modifications is best initiated with the EC in Winter quarter, 2010, so that final approval can be received prior to the end of the academic year. This will enable next year's committee, and a new committee chair, to have as much ability as possible to proceed quickly and successfully with the DTA process.

Committee members were to pick up the package of nomination materials from Gladys Gregory beginning on Tuesday 8 December. We received 281 electronic nominations this year (versus 188 last year), including 98 eligible and valid nominations (versus 78 last year). Last year, it appeared that our co-promotional campaign with the Distinguished Scholarship Award created some confusion among students as to which program to nominate faculty for, and the website link for DTA nominations also experienced a technical problem that took ITS approximately 2 weeks to resolve, causing some frustration among students and alumni attempting to nominate faculty and probably reducing the number of nominations ultimately received. Chair Geringer worked with Professor Choi of the Distinguished Scholarship Award committee to separate the nomination processes these years and the outcome suggests that this may have been a wise action, and one to continue in future years.

The committee members will review nomination materials during the break period and meet during the first week of Winter quarter to select Finalists for this academic year's DTA process. At that time, we will also begin discussion of the reassessment process to use in preparing the proposed committee process and criteria to be used by the DTA in subsequent years.