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TO: Academic Senate  
FROM: Mike Geringer, Chair, Distinguished Teaching Award Committee  
RE: Report for Spring Quarter, 2008, of the Distinguished Teaching Awards Committee of the Academic Senate

At the beginning of Spring quarter, the 6 committee members received updated teaching materials from each of the 9 finalists for the Distinguished Teaching Award (DTA). The committee members each spent the first five weeks of the quarter visiting classes of the Finalists, with several members each visiting two to four classes for each of the finalists during this time. These visitations were in addition to the visitations we conducted during Winter quarter.

Due to the time frame suggested by the President's Office, which required lead time for preparing the announcement of the DTA recipients, we concluded visitations after the fifth week of the quarter. The committee then met on the afternoon of Friday, May 2, to review our experiences during visitations, discuss the candidates and their qualifications, and select individuals to recommend to President Baker for the award.

All members of the committee were in attendance for the meeting, except Luke Hodson, a representative from ASI. Mr. Hodson had a family emergency that prevented him from attending the meeting, but he provided input on the candidates and his ranking of them.

The committee's deliberations were particularly challenging this year, due to the quality of Finalists, and the committee took much more time in its deliberations than in prior years. However, after extensive discussion, consensus was achieved regarding 3 Finalists to recommend to President Baker (these nominees are unnamed in this memo, with identities concealed until such time as the President makes a public announcement). Chair Geringer then prepared a memo to President Baker and Provost Detwiler informing them of our recommendations. Geringer also collected and shredded the confidential information from the committee members, and took care of the remaining administrative activities necessary to conclude the process for the quarter and academic year. At the time of this memo, we are just awaiting action on three remaining items: (1) approval of a change in bylaws for the Senate which will affect the composition of the committee membership and procedures to be followed, (2) appointment of faculty and ASI representatives to the committee (at present, the only confirmed member of the committee for next year will be Chairperson Geringer, although qualifying nominations have been received from 3 other colleges), and (3) approval of processes for the committee to use during the 2008-2009 academic year.

As a result of our post-meeting discussion, I am proposing several initiatives for next year to further enhance the quality of the DTA process. In particular, since there will probably be 2 new ASI representatives as well as the addition of 7 recently-appointed faculty committee members, I will ensure that each member received written guidelines regarding the newly implemented processes regarding nomination and awarding of the DTA distinction. We will also initiate additional efforts to promote the DTA nominations, including an article in the Mustang Daily, notifications to the instructional department heads council and all campus clubs, and other venues.

As Chair, I would like to compliment each of the members of our committee: Professors Tom Ruehr (Agriculture), Fred DePiero (Engineering), and Lee Burgunder (Business), and the two ASI student representatives, Mr. Luke Hodgson and Ms. Sarah Vernizzi. This committee requires extensive time commitments for classroom visitations, as well as reviewing candidate nominations and other materials. It also requires attentiveness to a range of largely qualitative instruction-related activities of the finalists, in order to adequately identify the most outstanding teachers in our teaching-oriented university. Each of the committee members demonstrated commitment to the mission of the committee, and we had a productive and successful working environment throughout the year. We were particularly pleased to have continued, active involvement by the two student members, who provided insightful student perspectives during our deliberations, comments that we found invaluable.

I would also like to thank the 9 finalists (who will go unnamed in this memo) for their graciousness in providing the committee with a range of requested materials during Winter and Spring quarters, and for allowing us to visit their classes without warning. Such visitations can be disruptive and stressful, but each of the candidates demonstrated true professionalism in responding to the process, which provides further indication of their outstanding capabilities and their value to the university and its students.

Cal Poly is an institution devoted to high quality education, and the recognition of our most distinguished teachers is an appropriate and valuable activity. Therefore, I also would like to thank the Senate for identifying and appointing strong faculty and student candidates for the DTA committee, and thank the Alumni Association for providing financial sponsorship for the award.

I would like to recognize the departure of Professors DePiero and Burgunder from this committee after this academic year, and I would like to acknowledge both of these individuals for their invaluable contributions to the successful functioning of the committee. Their continued participation will be missed, but we look forward to the addition of up to 7 new representatives for the 2008-2009 academic year.

Last, but certainly not least, I would like to thank Ms. Gladys Gregory from the Academic Senate Office. As she has for many years, Gladys provided truly exceptional support for our committee, including extensive administrative support in arranging promotion of the award, managing the receipt of hundreds of nominations and vetting the nominations to eliminate



non-qualifying candidates. She also handled a range of other administrative activities, including numerous contacts with the finalists, collecting and collating, and disseminating materials from the candidates to the committee members. The smooth functioning and successful outcome of our committee's activities are due, in large part, to her excellent support. I would like to recognize and thank her for performance that, in itself, is truly distinguished.