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TO: Academic Senate

FROM: Mike Geringer, Chair, Distinguished Teaching Award Committee

RE: Report for Spring Quarter, 2010, of the Distinguished Teaching Awards Committee of the Academic Senate

At the beginning of Spring quarter, the 8 committee members received updated teaching materials from each of the 8 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 8 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 from 6-8 a.m. on the morning of Monday, May 3, to review our experiences during visitations, discuss the candidates and their qualifications, and select individuals to recommend to Academic Senate Chair and President Baker for the award. All members of the 8-member committee were in attendance for the meeting, except Allison Marino, a representative from ASI.

The committee's deliberations were particularly challenging this year, and the committee took much time in its deliberations. However, after extensive discussion, consensus was achieved regarding 2 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 Senate Chair Rachel Fern-Flores to convey to President Baker, informing them of our recommendations, as well as a brief summary of student comments and committee perceptions supporting the selection of the two recommended recipients of the award. Geringer also prepared personal memos to each of the Finalists, thanking them for allowing the committee members to visit their classes. 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.

On May 13, Chair Geringer attended a Senate Executive Committee meeting that discussed policies and procedures for various Senate committees, and the committee's policies and procedures were again approved by the Executive Committee.

As Chair, I would like to compliment each of the members of our committee: Professors Phil Nico (COE), Matt Moelter (CSM), Mike Lucas (CAED), David Headrick (CAFES), and Mike Fahs (CLA), and our two ASI student representatives, Sarah Prince and Allison Marino. 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 at least one of our student members, as Sarah provided valuable input in our process across all three quarters.

I would also like to thank the 8 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.

Finally, 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.