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To: Academic Senate

From: Michael Lucas, Professor of Architecture
Chair, Distinguished Teaching Awards Committee, 2011-2012

Re: Committee Report for Spring Quarter, 2012

The spring quarter brings the class visitations and awards deliberations to a close. At the end of winter quarter the Chair solicited syllabi, and a preferred calendar for visitations from the eight award finalists. The eight finalists represented six departments across CSM, CENG, CAED, and CLA. Gladys Gregory from the Academic Senate office compiled these materials and in keeping with our commitment to a paperless process, sent a digital compilation and calendar of available class visitation times to the committee members.

To accommodate the award recommendation process in time for Presidential Spring Commencement recognition, class visitations began week one and continued through the end of week five of spring quarter. Communications sent by finalists as to revised location, logistics or class availability, which are not uncommon, were communicated to the committee. It is noted the presence of observers in classrooms over ten weeks in winter and spring quarters goes far beyond what even the peer review processes on campus typically entail. The committee is privileged to see teaching at the highest level across large lecture, lecture, small seminar, lab, and field trip venues. The committee witnesses articulate speech, virtual reality and demonstrations in real time from freshmen to graduate students and from General Education classes to core classes for majors. We see our peers deal with almost random disruptions and unexpected happenings, as well as insightful student questions and commentary with grace and concern for their students and learning environment. We are a strong teaching university due to an abundance of great teachers, and the committee can affirm the candidates for 2011-12 met all the promise documented in the initial student/alumni nominations. We are fortunate to have such colleagues at the highest level of care in their concerns for the craft of teaching and students.

Committee members, to the best of their ability, visit each class taught by each candidate. This can mean typically as much as sixty hours of observations by each committee member over winter and spring. These visits provide unprecedented ability to see our finalists teach across their courses, and entail a huge commitment for negotiating amidst the committee member's own class schedules. I would like to acknowledge all of my teaching colleagues in their commitment to this unique campus process and for their professional demeanor over the year: India D'Avignon [CLA], Michael Geringer [OCOB], Bill Hendricks [CAFES], Phil Nico [CENG], Peter Runge [PCS], and Nanine Van Draanen [CSM], as well as ASI representatives Chandler Wilson and Sean Skyllinstad.

The Chair called for a meeting on May 8, and the committee met from 2:15 to 2:55 to discuss the awards. The entire committee was present. Attesting to the quality of this finalist group, while ranked, each of the eight 2011-12 finalists in an initial straw poll received support as a possible awardee. Each finalist had exhibited excellence in teaching during the visitations as evidenced in the testimony of the committee members during these deliberations. Consensus developed across the discussions and a motion with passed with unanimous approval to recommend three candidates to the Senate Chair Fernflores and President Armstrong for the 201-12 awards. The Chair thanked the committee members for their service, and especially acknowledged Michael Geringer for his contributions to and leadership of the committee across many years. Any confidential hard copy materials were collected by the Chair for shredding and disposal.

The Chair communicated the committee recommendations to Senate Chair Fernflores, and the recommendations were affirmed in notes to the Chair from the Senate Chair Fernflores and President Armstrong. The President's Office had not made the names of the three awardees public at the time of this report.

The Chair communicated letters of thanks to all of the candidates, noting that it is an honor to be nominated, and a high honor to be selected as a finalist for the Distinguished Teaching Award.

The Chair in particular would like to thank Gladys Gregory for her excellent and valued work supporting and coordinating many aspects of communications and materials on behalf of the Chair and committee. She supports the committee across the entire academic calendar and challenging deadlines. This is all done so with helpfulness and good cheer. She is a valued colleague and the efficiency of the committee is largely attributable to her skills.