

## **DISTINGUISHED TEACHING AWARD COMMITTEE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

*(updated on 1 June 2022)*

### **Governance Principles**

The committee members strongly believe that the Distinguished Teaching Award is one of, if not the, foremost award on this campus, particularly given that the CSU's mission is primarily teaching-focused. In that spirit, we strongly embrace the principle that the committee be run in an objective, apolitical, non-departmentally-biased, consensus-driven manner.

### **Membership**

For 2021-22, the Distinguished Teaching Award committee had 6 faculty members (all appointed by the Senate Executive Committee) and 2 student members (appointed by ASI). These numbers have varied in past years. The committee would ideally continue to be constituted of DTA awardees from each Cal Poly college and two ASI representatives.

The size and composition of the committee affects the breadth of perspectives represented, as well as process issues (setting meeting times, visiting classes, making decisions, achieving consensus). It is our opinion that diverse perspectives (college, pedagogy) are adequately served by a committee of 5 - 6 faculty members plus 2 student members, and that a larger committee size would likely suffer from diseconomies of scale outweighing any potential benefits from broader college-based representation.

We recommend the committee have a minimum of 5 and a maximum of 6 appointed faculty members in any given academic year. For colleges not represented in a particular year, it is recommended that a rotational approach be adopted whereby suitable candidates would be appointed from non-represented colleges in the next appointment cycle, if appropriately qualified candidates from the non-represented colleges are willing to serve. In the exceptional circumstances where an insufficient number of qualified volunteers are available to serve on the committee, we recommend that the Executive Committee consider making an interim, 1-year appointment of an appropriately qualified, willing volunteer from a college already represented on the committee.

The committee members reinforce the desirability of active participation of appropriately qualified and committed student representatives on the committee, in order to ensure that their perspectives are incorporated in deliberations. However, as is the case with faculty representatives, we want to ensure that such representatives voluntarily serve on the committee and are aware of the workload commitment the committee entails, and that all such student appointees are fully prepared to meet these requirements.

In the past, all faculty committee members were prior award winners and were volunteers. In 2008, the guidelines were modified by the Executive Committee to allow non-award recipients to serve on the committee as long as there was strong evidence of sustained instructional excellence by the committee member(s) in question. If non-award recipient committee members are nominated by students for the Distinguished Teaching Award, careful management of deliberations will be necessary to avoid potential conflicts of interest.

Because service on the committee is time-consuming, we want to reiterate that membership be voluntary but that all members participate fully in the collective work of selecting finalists and recommending awardees. We do not encourage the appointment of members who are not aware of the workload and who are not committed, in a voluntary and complete manner, to fully undertake these tasks.

**Nominations**

Nominations are sought each Fall quarter from students or alumni, the "consumers" of teaching efforts who are best positioned to assess the quality and effectiveness of an instructor's teaching performance. The committee strongly supports the continued practice of requiring that all valid nominations be received exclusively from current students or alumni.

The committee continues to recommend that only tenured faculty members be eligible for the DTA award. While other instructors on campus might clearly have achieved outstanding instructional performance, the differing nature of their professional assignments and other factors caused us to make this recommendation. It should be noted that other recognitions are available on campus for distinctive performance by lecturers or untenured faculty, and that untenured faculty members who achieve sustained excellence in their teaching endeavors will be eligible for this award once tenure is earned.

**Evaluation**

The committee reviews all eligible nominations and selects the best candidates as finalists, regardless of college or discipline. It is expected that all committee members personally visit classes of all finalists teaching in person and/or virtually visit the classes of finalists teaching online, so they will have direct experience in observing the instructional approaches used by the finalists in their various course preparations. Due to the unique nature of the evaluative task at hand, the committee members strongly support the importance of having each committee member visit the classes of each finalist, on a multiple-visitation and multiple-preparation basis.

**Reporting**

The DTA Committee Chair, with the help of the Academic Senate office, will include supporting information in its recommendation. If such information is readily available, the supporting information should include each recommended recipient's name, department, college, rank, curriculum vitae and background biographical data, a statement supporting a case for the recommended recipient's excellence above other nominees, and copies of the nominations received by the Academic Senate in support of the recommended recipient. The President's office will forward this information, exclusive of any protected information, to public affairs and other entities as necessary.

**Recognition**

As part of the recognition of instructional excellence at Cal Poly, we recommend that information on prior DTA recipients continue to be published on the Senate website.