

Proposal to Recast the Annual Faculty Teaching Awards

Problem: The current make-up of the divisions makes for a reasonably small pool of Social Science faculty and a high pool of the others. Current breakdown: 45% Humanities, 37% Natural and Behavioral Sciences, 18% Social Sciences. It's not quite like giving California and Wyoming the same number of senators, but it is imbalanced. (Actually, it is like giving California and New York the same number of senators. Did you know that New York, our fourth largest state, has less than half the population of California? But I digress . . .)

The divisions have a significant role in terms of identity, but a relatively minimal role in governance. Divisions are used primarily to determine representation on a few committees (and the disproportionate division sizes create their own issues on that score). The other primary purpose of the divisions is to define categories for the teaching awards.

There have been some discussions about changing the make-up of the divisions, but I wonder if that is necessary to solve the teaching awards. So a proposal:

1. Keep the same terms of eligibility: faculty members must be full-time, must have served three years, and must be returning the next year (i.e., this is not a retirement award).
2. Keep essentially the same process: Nominations by faculty and graduating seniors, selection by a committee of previous award recipients.
3. Continue to give three awards. At least one must be given to a full professor, and at least one must be given to an associate professor, assistant professor, or instructor (currently about 57% of faculty are full professors).
4. Research award would remain unchanged.
5. We would not legislate any specific quotas, but would admonish and trust the selection committee to consider balances in terms of academic fields, gender, and diversity.

The Faculty Council supports this plan, and I would like to see if the Academic Senate can support it as well. If so, I would let faculty know of this change well in advance of the actual nomination and selection process.