

MEMORANDUM

TO: Faculty Senate
FROM: Committee on CNU Teaching and Mentoring Awards
DATE: March 17, 2006
RE: Committee Recommendations

Committee Members include: Harold Cones (BIOL), Susan St. Onge (MCLL), Quentin Kidd (GOVT), and Nathan Busch (GOVT).

Background:

This committee came into existence in the Fall of 2005 to recommend the creation of campus wide teaching and mentoring award(s) based upon merit. Quality teaching and mentoring is embedded throughout Vision 2010, but especially under University Priority III: An Inspired Faculty, with a goal to "Cultivate a faculty committed to teaching and learning excellence and to university citizenship." Thus, awarding quality teaching and mentoring is an important part of realizing the goals of Vision 2010.

In addition to helping the university realize the goals of Vision 2010, a campus-wide teaching and mentoring award would serve another important function related to CNU's ability to compete for the SCHEV Outstanding Faculty Award. In recent years it has become apparent that CNU's nominees for the SCHEV Outstanding Faculty Award have been hindered, in part, because they did not have substantive (merit-based) departmental, college and/or campus wide teaching awards listed on their applications. Most nominees from most schools have been nominated only after winning such merit-based awards. Thus, CNU's nominees have been at a competitive disadvantage in recent years in part because they have lacked a record of merit-based awards.

Research and findings:

The committee conducted research to learn about other institutions' awards, including how common it is to have awards and how they are made. A web review of the teaching awards at about two-dozen schools both regionally and nationally was conducted. The results of the review are:

First – The overwhelming majority of schools examined appear to have at least one (and several have more than one) campus-wide merit-based teaching award. The general pattern is that departments nominate a faculty member for the award. Nominations include supporting documentation, such as teaching evaluations, letters from

colleagues and current and former students. The overwhelming majority of schools also have college-level teaching awards, and many references to departmental teaching awards were also noted. Larger universities had more award categories than did smaller schools.

Second – the school's alumni offices and foundations sponsored about half of all campus-wide teaching awards; however, regardless of who sponsored the award, nominations seemed to go through the provost's office most of the time. About half of the awards were named awards.

Third – Actual awards varied from cash prizes to recognition at an annual awards event, to simple recognition. Awards sponsored by alumni offices/foundations or awards that were named in honor of someone tended to come with some prize.

Recommendations:

Based upon this review, the committee makes the following recommendations:

First, a named university-wide teaching and mentoring award be created (for instance, "The _____ Award for Excellence in Teaching and Mentoring"). It is recommended that this award be merit-based and bring with it some form of remuneration. This award would, the committee hopes, be highly sought and valued by the entire university. Nominations should come from departments and in particular, it is recommended that nominations follow the format of the SCHEV Outstanding Faculty Award application, which would require evidence of high quality scholarship of teaching, scholarship of discovery, scholarship of application, and scholarship of integration. Such evidence might come in the form of (but not be limited to) a statement from the nominee about the importance of teaching, scholarship, service, and mentoring, letters of support, evaluations of teaching by colleagues, syllabi and other course materials, and copies of scholarship related to teaching and mentoring. In addition, the department chair should forward a letter of nomination attesting to the quality of the nominee's record.

Second, the College of Liberal Arts and Science and the School of Business are encouraged to create awards for teaching and mentoring with their respective divisions. These awards would need to take on a character of their own that reflects the purpose of each division, but should celebrate teaching, scholarship, and service.