STUDENT LED AWARD TASK FORCE SPECIAL REPORT
TExAS A&M STUDENT GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION
2008-2009

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PREPARED BY:

THE MEMBERS OF THE STUDENT LED AWARD FOR TEACHING EXCELLENCE TASK FORCE
KOLIN LOVELESS – SENATE – CO CHAIR
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Forward:

Dr. Michael McKinney, Chancellor of the Texas A&M University System, initiated a program to reward the excellent teachers of the Texas A&M University System based exclusively on student evaluation. On September 8th, 2008, the Faculty Senate passed a Resolution opposing the Chancellor’s plan. Shortly thereafter, the Texas A&M University at College Station Student Senate passed legislation acknowledging the Faculty Senate’s concerns while at the same time commending the Chancellor’s intent to reward top teachers based on student opinion. As a result of this legislation, Chancellor McKinney and Dr. Elsa Murano, President of Texas A&M University, asked the Student Government Association to create a proposal to develop a system that would fairly address the Faculty’s misgivings while establishing a strongly student focused awards program. This report contains the recommendations of the task force that was created by SGA as a result of this charge. While a specific plan is laid out for the current semester, more time and more detailed information will allow for significant improvements in future semesters.

The Stakeholders:

The entire Texas A&M University System holds a stake in this initiative. The students have the opportunity to reward teachers that are performing their duties with excellence. The faculty has an opportunity to be rewarded for their hard work and commitment to student learning. The chancellor has the opportunity to improve the quality of instruction in the Texas A&M University System, reward the best teachers, and continue to make Texas A&M University the best university in the world.

A note from the Authors:

We, the principal authors, would like to extend our appreciative thanks to all the members of the task force: John Deleonardis, Jonathan Luu, Anuj Vyas, Paul Boehm, Elizabeth Maxwell, Anand Narayanan, Larry Hopper, Cody Vasut, Eric Beckham, Ross Coleman, Rachel McCreary, Chelsey Meek-Beck, Andrew Harrell, Hayden Paul, Brady Black and Jose Landeros. Without each of their time and hard work, this proposal would not have been possible.

Additionally, on behalf of the entire task force, we would like to extend our deep gratitude to every administrator, faculty member, student, the Chancellor’s Office, and anyone else who served as a source of information or guidance in the creation of this document.

Finally, we hope this proposal will be used to initiate positive change for all the members of the Texas A&M University System.
The Forms:
The Eligibility Form will be submitted by the Instructor to enroll in the program. This will handle the registration process, and the distribution of the survey. This section also outlines the information submitted from the department heads for the top 25% of scores in the university. The authors would like to note that faculty teaching one or two hour courses will be excluded from the program in its current form. We feel that the committee should work with the Chancellor to include these courses in a manner that is agreeable to all parties.

1. Enrollment and Eligibility Form
   a. Designed by Texas A&M University at College Station Administration.
   b. Form will contain
      i. Demographic questions
      ii. Course listing (department name, course number, and section number) of all courses three credit hours or more being taught.
      iii. Confirmation that the instructor is teaching at least one course with at least five students for a graduate level course and at least ten students for an undergraduate level course.
      iv. Confirmation that the instructor has not won the top tier award for any course in the past two semesters or the second tier award for any course in the past semester.
   c. Listing of Department Head
   d. Disclosure statement of all information, not used for evaluation purposes, solely for the purposes of this award. Allows committee to have access to results.
   e. Collected and placed into candidate packet for top 25% by Texas A&M Administration.

2. Questionnaire from the Chancellor’s Office
   a. Shall be distributed to all three hour classes for the instructor
   b. If more than one three hour course is being taught, each course shall be considered individually; however, each instructor may only receive one award per semester.
   c. Collected and placed into candidate packet for top 25% by Texas A&M Administration

3. Information from Department Head
   a. Only compiled for instructors with scores in the top 25%
   b. The information to be submitted by Department Heads will include:
      i. Passed and current course grade distributions.
      ii. Passed student responses to the survey produced by the Chancellor’s Office (when such information is available).
      iii. A brief statement on the appropriateness of the rigor of the course and the material covered. This is not to be used as a recommendation, but rather a check against issues like grade inflation and to insure that the correct material was covered in the course.

The Process:
This section outlines the overall process for all parties involved. The survey proposed by the Chancellor will be used to find the faculty that score in the top 25%. After that the SLATE University Committee will convene to select the recipients. The specific parameters for this process are outlined below.

**Texas A&M Administration**

The administration will distribute the surveys. The surveys will be completed by students, and turned in by a student volunteer from the class. The professor will not have access to the surveys at anytime. The departments are responsible for submitting information only on the top 25% of candidates that are from their departments.

1. Enrollment by Professors/Teachers.
   a. Fill out Demographic Form.
   b. Turned into Texas A&M Administration.
2. Distribution of Chancellor Questionnaire.
   a. Distributed to all three hour courses of the Instructor.
   b. Results compiled by Texas A&M University.
      i. Aggregate scores on 20 questions.
   c. Top 25% of scores determined and aggregate scores placed into candidate packet along with a compilation of student responses to the free response question.
3. Distribution of Supervisor Perspective Forms.
   a. Distributed to Department Head listed on demographic sheet for top 25%.
      Results due 7 days later.
   b. Results placed into candidate packet.
4. Compilation of Candidate Packets.

**Student Led Awards for Teaching Excellence Committee**

A university committee will be formed to select the recipients of the awards from top 25%. This was done to give the process more than just one level of evaluation. The task force concluded that a University Committee led primary by students under the supervision of a staff advisor from Student Activities would best be able to consider the survey along with the other information outlined below to make a decision.

5. Function of the Committee
   a. Evaluate the teachers that score in the top 25% of the survey produced by the Chancellor’s Office by:
      i. Considering the itemized results of the survey. This should constitute seventy-five percent of the committee’s decision.
      ii. Considering the course syllabus and teaching philosophy to be submitted by each professor.
      iii. Considering the following information to be attained from Department Heads.
         1. Past and current course grade distributions.
2. Past student responses to the survey produced by the Chancellor’s Office (when such information is available).

3. A brief statement on the appropriateness of the rigor of the course and the material covered. This is not to be used as a recommendation, but rather a check against issues like grade inflation and to insure that the correct material was covered in the course.

   iv. Brief responses to an open-ended question on the student survey.

b. Finalize and submit to appropriate parties all results within six weeks of the last day of finals.

c. Annually evaluate and improve the committee’s process.

6. Members of the Student Led Award Committee.

   a. Appointed for each academic year as a 13 member University Committee with a faculty/staff advisor from Student Activities/Student Affairs.

   b. The members of the committee shall be selected from the following areas:

      i. The Student Body President and the Speaker of the Student Senate shall each select one non-voting co-chair to lead the committee and perform the following tasks.

          1. Select the voting members of the committee.
          2. Call and facilitate all meetings.
          3. Present the results of the committee to the appropriate parties.
          4. Regularly communicate with the committee advisor.

      ii. Graduate Student Council Representative with consideration to be made based on the recommendation of the Graduate Student Council President.

      iii. Representatives from the 10 Colleges: the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, Mays Business School, the College of Education, the College of Science, the College of Geosciences, the College of Architecture, the Dwight E. Look College of Engineering, the College of Liberal Arts, the George Bush School of Government and Public Service, and the College of Veterinary Medicine and Biomedical Sciences.

      iv. At least one representative from U1, U2, U3, U4, and a graduate student or professional student.

   c. Criteria of membership.

      i. Each member must have at least a 2.5 cumulative Grade Point Ratio.

      ii. No member (other than co-chairs) may currently be serving in the Executive Council, Student Senate, or Judicial Court of SGA.

      iii. No member shall be eligible to win the award.

      iv. Every member must be in good standing with the university.

7. Award Criteria

   a. Number of awards given

      i. One-third of all awards shall be given at large to any member of any college on a at large basis.

      ii. Two-thirds of the awards shall be given based on a ratio of the number of instructors in a College to the number of instructors in the University.

      iii. All colleges will be eligible for at least one award.
Chancellor of the Texas A&M University System

The Chancellor’s office will distribute the awards, and notify the recipients.

8. Final list compiled and presented to the Chancellor.
9. Award recipients notified by the Chancellor.
10. Recipients for classes taught in the fall honored at all University awards Ceremony in the spring, presented by representative of the SGA.

**Implementation and Evaluation:**

The task force would like to emphasize that the process should be reevaluated before the next cycle of awards. As with any new program there will be areas to improve upon. Information from the pervious year will be taken into account, and the committee will recommend any changes that need to be made to make the program more effective at selecting the best instructors at Texas A&M.