To Be Adopted:

The Academic Senate Committee on Distinguished Teaching recommends that Professor Scott Fedick (Department of Anthropology) and Professor Neal Schiller (Division of Biomedical Sciences) be recipients of the Distinguished Teaching Award for 2005-2006. Both have lengthy careers as consummate educators that have enriched our campus.

Professor Scott Fedick:

A single theme unites praise from Professor Fedick’s past and present undergraduate and graduate students: “He gauges his own success by the success of his students.” In acknowledging Dr. Fedick’s profound and sustained commitment to his students over the years, our committee recognizes his accomplishment at many levels. His field course, Anthropology 171 “Field Course in Maya Ecology” provides a centerpiece for Professor Fedick’s impressive teaching record. Through many years, this class has provided over 100 students experience in archaeological research in the Yucatan, subsidized by Dr. Fedick’s fund-raising efforts. His interests in teaching students about the wonders of Southwestern and Mexican archaeology created bridges with UCR colleagues in our Department of Botany and Plant Sciences, catalyzing interdisciplinary education between the two departments. Undergraduates from other campuses have taken advantage of such an exceptional opportunity. One undergraduate shares that “I am the only [Bachelors] graduate among my anthropology classmates to be employed as an archaeologist. I owe that to Dr. Fedick.” Those that have experienced this course return from this quarter-long field school with “...skills and memories they will probably keep for the rest of their lives.”

Mexico is but one of Dr. Fedick’s classrooms. He receives high praise in forums at all instructional levels that include large lower division courses (ANTH 5, Introduction to Anthropology; ANTH 12, Great Discoveries in Archaeology), foundation upper division undergraduate classes (ANTH 110, Prehistoric Agriculture; ANTH 112, Seminal Patterns and Locational Analysis; ANTH 115, Pre-history of the Southwest), and graduate courses pivotal to research training in his field (ANTH 252). This diverse teaching responsibility for the Anthropology department is accomplished along with his role as being Graduate Advisor “...since forever.” As Graduate Advisor, he has organized conferences that are carefully crafted to include graduate students from the UCR’s Anthropology Department whose sessions then become published, launching their scholarly activities and writings early in their careers.
Students at all levels are moved by Professor Fedick’s passion for Anthropology. He is routinely referred to as a gifted teacher, researcher, advisor and mentor that “…seamlessly combines these efforts and brings [his] research into the classroom.” Moreover, Dr. Fedick’s record is replete with comments on his high standards and expectations. One student reminisces that he “…taught me to understand critical feedback was not a personal attack…but a chance to improve.” Many other comments reflect his amazing ability to push students to their full potential and earn [their successes] on their own merit. Letters from students that he has launched, now well into their own professorships, uniformly confide that they could not have done it without Professor Fedick. “Scott has shaped who I have become and why I aspire to be an educator, researcher, colleague and human being…”

Superior performance in the lower division, upper division and graduate classrooms and in the field, and his ability to inspire students to meet and go beyond their potential, make Professor Fedick a most deserving recipient of the 2005-2006 Distinguished Teaching Award.

**Professor Neal Schiller:**

Creativity fueled by compassion is the undeniable signature of Professor Schiller’s remarkable teaching career at UCR. Professor Schiller arrived on our campus in 1979 as a member of our Biomedical Sciences faculty. He demonstrates a keen ability to recognize the needs of students at all academic levels, and then set into motion academic programs designed to enrich their training. Dr. Schiller’s concern for student welfare is far-reaching, embracing pre-freshmen about to matriculate to UCR, our current undergraduate students, students enrolled in our advanced degree graduate programs and, our future physicians engaged in the Thomas Haider Program in Biomedical Sciences. Both inside and outside the classroom, Professor Schiller is repeatedly depicted as an “initiator of change.”

Dr. Schiller organized UCR’s Fast Start program, a chance for socio-economically disadvantaged students to be introduced to a university-level summer curriculum prior to their Fall Quarter. Dr. Schiller’s fund raising has enabled this summer event to be cost-free to its participants. Once enrolled at UCR, many students transition to Professor Schiller’s Medical Scholars Program (MSP). This enrichment opportunity is also designed to provide a competitive edge and increase the diversity of our applicants to post-graduate programs in the allied health sciences. One student beneficiary of this program describes Dr. Schiller as “…an individual who is there to help in any way possible….his professional attitude towards life has made him one of my role models…”. Another states “…after every meeting with him, I leave with a greater sense of purpose and motivation.” Professor Schiller has helped many MSP students overcome obstacles and achieve their professional goals. The MSP curriculum deftly partners with the campus-wide Freshman Discovery/Freshman Advising
Seminars. Much of his teaching and mentoring in the MSP is delivered through these forums.

In 1993, perceiving a striking omission in graduate program coverage available on our campus, Professor Schiller crafted and implemented the Microbiology Graduate Program and became its first Director and Graduate Advisor. He developed a core graduate-level Microbiology course sequence and still regularly teaches MCBL 201 (Functional Diversity of Prokaryotes). The undergraduate upper division Microbiology track in the Biological Sciences Major is a direct outgrowth the graduate curriculum founded by Professor Schiller. His teaching legacy at the graduate level expands into the Biomedical Sciences graduate program, where he is a course organizer in BMSC 202 (Molecular Basis of Disease).

Perhaps Dr. Schiller’s most prominent contributions to instruction reside within the curriculum for the Thomas Haider Program in Biomedical Sciences that represents the basic sciences component of the joint UCR/UCLA medical school program. Dr. Schiller was responsible for converting the two-year course of study at UCR into a contemporary integrated disease-based model. He regularly teaches in BMSC 225A and 225B (Medical Microbiology) and BMSC 211B (Human Biology and Disease:Foundations), a large block component of the new curriculum. Student comments describing “killer Schiller” in the classroom have been outstanding across the decades. One medical student relates that “...Dr. Schiller has always been a strong advocate for helping students learn for themselves.” His sustained record as a devoted educator has been achieved while also serving the campus as a dedicated administrator in his capacities as the Interim Dean of the Graduate Division and Associate Dean of the Thomas Haider Program.

Because students at all levels (pre-college, undergraduate, graduate, medical) have responded passionately to Dr. Schiller’s instruction, and because Dr. Schiller tirelessly responds to his student’s needs in creative ways, Professor Schiller is a most worthy recipient of the 2005-2006 Distinguished Teaching Award.
Other business conducted by the Committee on Distinguished Teaching during the 2005-2006 academic year:

1. The Committee on Distinguished Teaching developed a “User’s Guide” to help faculty develop the strongest possible nomination files for deserving candidates. This guide was forwarded to all department chairs and program directors twice during the academic year.

2. The Committee on Distinguished Teaching offered a workshop on March 1, 2006 designed as a supplement to the User’s Guide to further describe how to assemble a nomination and more fully describe the Committee’s deliberation processes.

Scott Coltrane
Robin DiMatteo
Subir Ghosh
Bradley Hyman (Chair)
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