COMMITTEE ON FACULTY RESEARCH LECTURER
REPORT TO THE RIVERSIDE DIVISION
MAY 22, 2007

NOMINATION OF DISTINGUISHED PROFESSOR NATASHA RAIKHEL FOR FACULTY RESEARCH LECTURER FOR 2007-08

From its inception over fifty-five years ago, the Faculty Research Lecturer Award has been the highest honor that the Academic Senate bestows. The Faculty Research Lecturer Committee is honored to place in nomination Natasha Raikhel, Distinguished Professor of Botany and Plant Sciences, a scholar who, by every standard we could think of, will add luster to the award, Distinguished Professor of Botany and Plant Sciences.

Professor Raikhel’s studies of the molecular mechanisms governing trafficking in plants and of genetic control of cell wall polysaccharide biosynthesis have made lasting scientific contributions in plant biology. She has pioneered the use of chemical genomics to advance our knowledge of plant processes. Director of the Center for Plant Cell Biology, Professor Raikhel has pushed back the frontiers of the field, with what her colleagues describe as her “superb experimentalist,” if not “traditionalist,” approach: “It is fair to say that she is the world expert in this area” of “secretory trafficking,” especially with regard to its “multiple functions.”

Professor Raikhel’s work has earned many distinguished awards, including, but not limited to, a Guggenheim Fellowship, the Stephen Hales Prize from the American Society of Plant Biologists (which one outside referee describes as “the most prestigious award given by this society”), and a Senior Fellowship of the Japan Society for Promotion of Science. Professor Raikhel has been invited to speak to distinguished assemblies of scientists all over the world. Her scholarly publications number in the hundreds.

Professor Raikhel’s colleagues write from many major research centers, characterizing her innovations as having “had a strong effect on setting standards for experimental evidence and reporting in the plant biology community.” A major figure in her field writes that it is hard “to imagine another person who has contributed to her field more than” Professor Raikhel. Her “contributions . . . are extraordinary. She is internationally and nationally recognized as a leader in the plant cell biology field, and her name is synonymous with intercellular trafficking in plants.” Still another writes that Professor Raikhel is “the most highly visible person in [the] area of plant cell biology.”

These are only a few of the reasons why we, the undersigned members of the Senate Faculty Research Lecturer Committee, proudly, unanimously, and enthusiastically nominate, as Faculty Research Lecturer for 2007-08, Ernst and Helen Leibacher Distinguished Professor of Plant Cell Biology Natasha Raikhel.

Stanley N. Stewart, Chair (Department of English)
Roger Atkinson (Department of Environmental Sciences)
William A. Jury (Department of Environmental Sciences)
Dallas L. Rabenstein (Department of Chemistry)
R. Robert Russell (Department of Economics)