To be received and placed on file:

The Committee on Scholarships and Honors met twice during the 2013-2014 academic year and discussed several other matters electronically.

The committee reviewed the proposed amendments to Bylaw 8.1.1 of the Riverside Division of the Academic Senate and approved the changes unanimously.

The committee again oversaw the nomination process and selection for the Chancellor’s Awards for Excellence in Undergraduate Research and Creative Achievement. Eight valid nominations were received for the faculty awards and thirteen valid nominations were received for the student awards. The committee selected the following faculty and students as recipients of the 2013-2014 awards:

Faculty:
- Professor Allen Mills, Physics and Astronomy
- Professor Jingsong Zhang, Chemistry

Students:
- Alina Escalera, Physics and Astronomy
- Michael Turcios, dual major in Media and Cultural Studies and French

The committee voted to make subtle changes to the call for nominations and nomination process; these changes to the call were saved in the accompanying documents that are distributed to the campus as large. The committee also decided that department chairs will be contacted/notified for faculty nominations starting in the 2014-2015 nomination process. Department chairs will be asked to provide a short summary of the faculty nominee’s history/accomplishments in mentoring undergraduate research.

R. Budasz
J. Eichler, Chair
K. Guenther
J. Jang
Y. Li
D. Morikis
K. Sweeny
I. Wheeldon
J. Sandoval, Vice Chancellor, Student Affairs (ex officio)
J. Aguilar, Director of Student Financial Aid (ex officio)
C. Chu (Undergraduate student representative)
Faculty Recipients:

Professor Allen Mills, Physics and Astronomy:

In 13 years at the University of California, Riverside, Dr. Allen Mills has mentored 37 undergraduate students in laboratory research, despite having an industrial background which offered little experience in working with students. Of those 37 students, ten have co-authored journal articles with Dr. Mills (four of which appeared in peer-reviewed journals) and eight have obtained or are pursuing PhDs at some of the leading institutions in the country. Dr. Mills believes one of his main roles as an instructor is to challenge and inspire students not only to learn, but to achieve goals beyond what they themselves think they are capable of. Dr. Mills is dedicated to ensuring opportunities are available for minority students, having mentored 13 minority students.

Professor Jingsong Zhang, Chemistry:

Since 1998, Dr. Jingsong Zhan has mentored 32 undergraduate research students and has been proactive in integrating independent research opportunities into the chemistry curriculum. Since 200, Dr. Zhang has mentored 160 independent exploratory research projects and, supported by a $2m grant from the NSF, has been instrumental in establishing first-year laboratory research experiences in Freshman Learning Communities. Five of Dr. Zhang’s students have appeared with him as co-authors in peer-reviewed publications and his students have made 19 scholarly presentations of their work at conferences. Dr. Zhang’s undergraduate research students have also received 13 awards under his mentorship. Eight of Dr. Zhang’s students have been admitted to Ph.D. programs, and three students have subsequently earned Ph.D degrees in chemistry. Dr. Zhang is proactive in increasing diversity in scientific research; of the undergraduate students he has mentored, 18 are women, eight are Hispanic-American and two are African-American.
2013-2014 CHANCELLOR’S AWARDS FOR EXCELLENCE IN UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH AND CREATIVE ACHIEVEMENT

Student Recipients:

Alina Escalera, Physics and Astronomy:

Alina Escalera has established herself as one of the leading undergraduate students in the Physics and Astronomy department. Winner of the 2013 Albert Staats Award, which recognizes the best undergraduate who designs, builds, and uses prototype equipment in research, Ms. Escalera has also been the lead author of two publications and presented her work at multiple symposia. Ms. Escalera is an enthusiastic member of Dr. Allen Mills’ laboratory, encouraging her peers to pursue their own research interests and recruiting students to Dr. Mills’ lab. Ms. Escalera has been admitted to the PhD program in Physics at UCR and has been selected by NSF LSAMP Bridge to a Doctorate Program for 5 years of funding for a PhD program at UCLA, pending acceptance. Ms. Escalera’s academic accomplishments have been achieved while also caring for two Elementary School-aged children and frequently working two jobs to support them.

Michael Turcios, Dual Major in Cultural and Media Studies and French:

Michael Turcios is graduating with a double major in Media and Culture Studies and French and double minors in Ethnic Studies and Playwriting in June 2014. After completing a Senior Thesis for the University Honors Program on “The State of French National Cinema: National Identity and Historical Trauma in Post-World War II and Post-9/11,” Mr. Turcios embarked on a second senior thesis entitled “Synonymous with America: Disney, Borders, and Commodification of Cultures.” In conjunction with his second thesis, Mr. Turcios has also created a syllabus for a new course in the Department of Ethnic Studies on “Disney: Producing Race, Gender and Sexualities.” As an undergraduate student, Mr. Turcios has presented his research at seven academic conferences, serves as Student Editorial Board Member on UCR’s Undergraduate Research Journal and has translated from Spanish into English a peer-review journal article entitled “Sister, Daughter, Partner, Tourist… Negotiated Position in Intimate and Ethnographic Articulations.” He has earned a GPA of 3.8 even while working over 30 hours a week as an Assistant Resident Director for Housing, Dining, and Residential Services and as a Projectionist/Student Assistant for Department of Comparative Literature and Foreign Languages. Mr. Turcios has gained admission to the University Of Southern California Tisch School Of Cinema.