

COMMITTEE ON DISTINGUISHED TEACHING

NOMINATIONS FOR THE 2016-2017 DISTINGUISHED TEACHING AWARD

The Committee on Distinguished Teaching is pleased to nominate two outstanding, award-winning educators as co-recipients of the 2016-17 Distinguished Teaching Award.

Professor William Walton

Professor William Walton joined the Entomology Department in 1995, where he has served as Vice Chair since 2009. A common theme in his course evaluations and student letters is Dr. Walton's "tremendous commitment to student learning, achievement, and mentorship." Students are inspired and encouraged toward personal success thanks to "his patient guidance, personal kindness, and respect he directs to those he teaches and mentors."

Dr. Walton has taught at all levels of instruction, ranging from large introductory biology classes to specialized graduate entomology seminars. The committee found it remarkable that, after having almost two decades' worth of an excellent teaching record and student evaluations, Dr. Walton chose to attend an HHMI-National Academies Summer Institute on Undergraduate Education to learn new teaching pedagogy. In this Institute, Dr. Walton learned the precepts of student-centered teaching and learning reform, which he immediately implemented in his classes, both in the large and small classrooms. As summarized in one of the nomination letters, Professor Walton "recognized that instruction can always be delivered in new, better, and innovative ways, and to his credit he made a major investment to do just that. His considerable efforts have elevated a heretofore robust and durable teaching record into a distinguished one."

One example of Dr. Walton's student-centered innovations is his introduction of web-based research exercises within large BIOL 5C lectures, to allow students to conduct their own population growth simulations and investigate other intriguing topics. Another example is how he engages ENTM 114 students in active learning by taking them on several weekend field trips to aquatic habitats in southern California and has them generate their own bio-assessment reports. Dr. Walton is careful to conduct pre- and post- assessment evaluations of student knowledge, which demonstrate that these innovations have resulted in students having a much deeper understanding of the subject.

Dr. Walton has responsibility for administering the Entomology Department teaching program, and he is also heavily involved in outreach activities for educators and the general public. For a long career of consistent distinguished teaching, Dr. Walton is fully deserving of the Academic Senate Distinguished Teaching Award.