Cal Poly Selects Names Three Distinguished Teachers

Five longtime Cal Poly professors, all cited for their challenging classes and caring attitude, have been chosen to receive the 2002-2003 Distinguished Teaching Award, the university's highest teaching honor.

Winners are Biological Sciences Professor Alvin De Jong, Speech Communication Professor Bernard Duffy, and Materials Engineering Department Chair and Professor Linda Vanasupa. They will be recognized at Spring Commencement ceremonies on June 14.

In nomination letters, the three teachers were all commended for "going above and beyond" students' expectations, helping increase confidence, and making themselves available, both in and out of the classroom.

De Jong has been teaching at Cal Poly since 1973. His courses range from freshman biology classes to senior level physiology.

A student speaking on behalf of De Jong's nomination said, "He pushes his students to excel in each class that he teaches. He is very attentive to his students' needs and is willing to spend as much time with an individual as necessary in order for the student to succeed." DeJong was also said to "hold each of his students to the highest standards . allowing them to improve and showing them what is necessary to succeed in his classroom." And finally, "De Jong's incredible work ethic has taught me both discipline and self-respect."

He has authored scientific papers that have been published in the journals Condor and Physiology and Behavior. He also wrote laboratory manuals for introductory course in zoology and biology. He obtained funding from the National Science Foundation for laboratory equipment, and for a student research project, he obtained funding from Amgen Boulder Inc. De Jong has been active in several capacities as an advisor to students who intend to enter the health profession.

De Jong earned a bachelor's degree in zoology from Seattle Pacific College in 1965 and a doctorate in...
zoophysiology from Washington State University in Pullman in 1972.

Duffy came to Cal Poly in 1988 as department chair and served in that capacity until 1991. Since then he has taught full time. His classes include American political rhetoric, classical rhetoric, contemporary rhetorical theory, persuasion and propaganda, and public speaking.

Duffy was referred to as both "excellent" and "wonderful." In nominating Duffy for the award, a student noted that Duffy works hard to "keep his students' interest, spark their imagination and knowledge, and keep the class interesting." Additional comments included:

"He is always willing to take the extra time to help his students."
"He helps students think and push a little harder."
"Dr. Duffy is always concerned for his students' welfare. He can turn a quiet student into an active, engaging student."

In addition to publishing more than 30 scholarly articles and book chapters, Duffy is the co-editor of two encyclopedias on American orators and a book on health communication research. He is also co-author of a book on a contemporary rhetorical theorist and a book on General Douglas MacArthur's rhetoric. He is the originator and co-advisor of a series of 33 books on individual American orators.

Duffy won the College of Liberal Arts Outstanding Scholar Award in 2001. He earned a bachelor's degree in speech communication in 1970 and a master's in 1971, both from San José State University. He earned a doctorate in rhetoric and public address from the University of Pittsburgh in 1976.

Vanasupa began teaching at Cal Poly in 1991, taking over as department chair in 2002. She is credited with broadening the Materials Engineering Department's curriculum by creating a laboratory for microelectronics processing. Her teaching approach uses "real world" situations that engage the students in the process of identifying and solving their own technical problems. "Dr. Vanasupa is a very enthusiastic professor who always makes students feel comfortable and confident about learning," said a student. Additional remarks include:

"She has a great understanding of the material she teaches and does an effective job at helping her students learn it."
"She always has an extra minute to stop and help out."
"In addition to being a great teacher and mentor, Linda Vanasupa has helped me understand the importance of the journey over actually achieving goals."

Vanasupa has served as a research scientist at Advanced Micro Devices in Sunnyvale and as a senior staff engineer at PaceSetter Systems in Sylmar. She has co-authored dozens of articles that have appeared such publications as the Journal of Applied Physics, the International Journal of Engineering Education, the Journal of Electronic Materials and the Journal of Food Science. She has won the Northrop-Grumman Excellence in Teaching and Applied Research Award for the College of Engineering, the Dow Outstanding New Faculty Award from the American Society for Engineering Education, and the TRW Excellence in Teaching Award for the College of Engineering.

Vanasupa earned a bachelor's degree in metallurgical engineering from Michigan Technological University in Houghton in 1985 and, from Stanford University, a master's in 1987 and doctorate in 1991, both in materials science and engineering. All three 2002-2003 distinguished teachers live in San Luis Obispo.

Students and alumni of the university nominate the distinguished teachers. Cal Poly has named 123 distinguished professors since the awards program's inception in 1964.