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Motion I

I move that the faculty assembly endorse the following policy for selecting a valedictorian for the academic year.

- The graduating students with the five highest grade point averages as determined by the University Registrar will be asked to submit their valedictory addresses two months prior to this event.
- A committee comprised of five full-time faculty members from departments other than the major departments of the candidates will be selected by the Executive Committee from volunteers and will select the valedictorian based on its evaluation of the valedictory addresses submitted by the candidates.

Rationale – It would seem that two major purposes of a valedictory address are to educate the audience as well as inspire students to use their education to benefit others. I don't believe it should simply serve as a reward to the student earning the highest grade point average, although there is value in publicly recognizing those whose achievement is noteworthy. However, given that little if any meaningful distinctions can be discerned in the academic achievement of students whose grade point averages differ by a few hundredths of a point and that courses and faculty no doubt vary in a variety of ways across disciplines, it makes sense to give several of the top students an opportunity to demonstrate that their valedictory address would produce the effects noted above. It would be a mistake in my view to select a student as valedictorian on the basis of grade point average alone if another student, with the same grade point average for all practical purposes, would deliver an address that was more likely to produce the desired effects.

Motion II

I move that the faculty assembly endorse the policy that the faculty recognition award, typically announced at the awards ceremony prior to graduation, be based on a vote of the entire full time undergraduate population obtained from a paper or online ballot delivered to this population one month prior to the above ceremony.

Rationale – The current basis for determining the recipient of the faculty recognition award is unfair. If we are to have such an award in the first place, and I'm sure there are arguments for why we should not, all faculty should not only have a similar opportunity to be nominated but also to garner votes from students. Given that several faculty teach in departments that have relatively few majors and that these and other faculty may very likely be teaching introductory level courses populated with first and second year students who are ineligible to vote under the current system, it would appear that the current procedures, which restrict voting eligibility to third and fourth year students, discriminate against those faculty. To the extent this award is taken seriously in promotion and tenure decisions, as well as in other contexts, it is important to change the procedure for determining the recipient of this honor.

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