ALISON AWARD:

PROCEDURES, CRITERIA, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

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This report represents the Chair's understanding of the Committee's assessment of the traditional purpose and procedures of the Alison Award, as well as the Committee's efforts to clarify the award's criteria for excellence.
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Procedures, Criteria, and Recommendations

PURPOSE OF AWARD

The Francis Alison Faculty Award was established by the Faculty-Trustee Committee on Honorary Degrees on December 11, 1976 (Appendix A), to recognize "that faculty member of the University of Delaware who has made notable contributions to his/her field of study."

As described further below, this award is intended to honor the highest levels of overall excellence as a scholar-educator at the University of Delaware.

NATURE OF THE AWARD

One award may be granted each year. However, the award is not necessarily made each year.

The Alison Award consists of a medal on a pendant chain, and a Citation suitably inscribed and signed by the President of the University. It also carries a grant of $5,000, which is funded by the President's Office.

ELIGIBILITY

All current full-time faculty members are eligible.

The definition of "faculty" for purposes of the Alison Award is the same as that for the Excellence in Teaching and Undergraduate Advisement Awards:

1. all full-time faculty who hold primary appointments as faculty and
2. all full-time professionals and administrators who hold secondary appointments as faculty.

The presumption has been that individuals may receive the award only once.

Individuals who are nominated but do not win in any one year may be nominated again.

The Alison Award may not be awarded posthumously or in
absentia. According to the document establishing the Alison award (Appendix A), if the recipient cannot attend the ceremony at which the award is scheduled to be presented, presentation of the award may be deferred to a subsequent year, or scheduled for another appropriate ceremonial occasion.

CRITERIA FOR EXCELLENCE

Most generally, "notable" is defined according to the kinds of achievement demonstrated by the Rev. Francis Alison. As stated in the Committee’s announcement soliciting nominations:

President Ezra Stiles of Yale called Alison, the founder of the school that developed into the University [of Delaware], "the greatest Classical scholar in American, especially Greek," It was said of him that "few schoolmasters (in the American colonies) ever taught a larger number of pupils who afterwards acquired such distinguished reputations," pupils like Thomas McKean and George Read of Delaware. The Committee seeks to identify those individuals in our intellectual and moral community of whom such things may one day be said.

The Committee found it useful to develop more specific criteria to instantiate these general guidelines. It began by noting the importance of two general kinds of achievement: (a) widely-recognized contributions as a scholar and (b) widely-recognized contributions as a "schoolmaster." There must be strong evidence of both kinds of achievement for a nominee to be considered for the award.

The Committee then determined that, according to past interpretation of the criteria, candidates must demonstrate that they have made, or have continued to make, both kinds of notable contributions while at the University of Delaware. This means that otherwise highly meritorious individuals who have recently joined the University probably will not be very competitive for the award for their first few years here.

Based on the foregoing determinations, the Committee developed four specific criteria to guide its assessment of the evidence submitted to it:

1. Impact of scholarship directly on the field
   (innovations, patents, insights; changed the pattern of scholarship or way of thinking in the field)

2. Recognition of scholarship by the field
   (number of awards; prestigious awards; sought out as speaker and consultant)
3. "Schoolmaster" to the field: impact on field via impact on students (produces graduate students who themselves make contributions to the field; affects undergraduate students who go into the field [e.g., involves them in research])

4. "Schoolmaster" at the University of Delaware (UD educational programs developed or run; impact on UD colleagues in the field; impact on scholarship of UD students [in any field])

NOMINATION PROCESS

Candidates are nominated in a two-step process.

1. The Honors Committee invites faculty to nominate candidates to their deans in a letter to all faculty in early March. These faculty nominations are typically due to the deans by April 15.

2. Deans, who are notified of the nomination process at the same time as are the faculty, then submit to the Honors Committee materials for the one best-qualified candidate from their colleges (up to three, ranked, from the College of Arts and Sciences, owing to its large size). The deans' nominations are due to the Honors Committee by May 1.

MATERIALS SUBMITTED BY THE DEANS

The Honors Committee requires a vita and a letter of nomination from the dean for each candidate. The letter of nomination, usually several pages long, details the candidate's achievements and qualifications and cites supporting evidence.

Other supporting materials are not necessary. The Committee prefers quality, not quantity, of evidentiary materials.

SELECTION PROCESS

The Faculty Senate Office staff prepares files for each of the nominees (usually numbering four to eight), which it makes available for review by Committee members.

Each Committee member independently reviews the materials for each candidate. They each record their assessments of the strength and kind of evidence submitted for each candidate on forms which list the specific criteria for excellence (see Appendix C). Members then rank the nominees, making note of
their reasons for that ranking.

The Committee then convenes (a) to determine whether any of the candidates meets the high standards of excellence required for the award and, if so, (b) to select an awardee. Members may share their rankings, their reasons for those rankings, review the evidence again, or do anything else that is helpful for the Committee to make a fair, deliberate determination that reflects consensus, to the extent possible.

MATERIALS RETAINED AND RETURNED BY THE HONORS COMMITTEE

The Committee retains in its permanent files the materials for the awardee. It returns all materials for the other nominees to the nominating deans. Those files are returned the following spring so that the deans can renominate those candidates that year, if they so wish.

NOTIFICATION AND PRESENTATION OF THE AWARD

The chair of the Honors Committee transmits the name of the year’s awardee to the President’s Office, the director of University Relations, and the President-Elect of the Faculty Senate. The former two are notified because they notify the awardee, confirm that he or she will attend the award ceremony, and make the arrangements for presenting the award, which always occurs at the Fall Convocation for new students.

The President-Elect is notified because he or she is responsible for composing and reading a statement about the awardee’s achievements at the Convocation ceremony. The Committee can assist the President-Elect in this task by making the supporting materials for the awardee available and offering to answer any pertinent questions shortly after the Committee makes its decision.

Neither the chair nor any other member of the Committee may reveal the name of the awardee before the presentation of the award.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee believes that the criteria for excellence (particularly those relative to "schoolmaster") should be made clearer to deans so that they can present the best cases possible for their candidates. Therefore, it recommends that:

Recommendation 1: The announcements soliciting nominations from the deans should review the two general criteria used
by the Committee and the four specific kinds of evidence it seeks.

**Recommendation 2:** The announcement to the deans should also advise them that the Committee seeks evidence that the candidate has made or been recognized for some of both kinds of contributions while at the University of Delaware.
Honors, and one member of the professional staff chosen by PRAC. Appointments will be for a two-year period, staggered where possible. The Committee will elect its own chairperson. Records will be maintained by the Secretary of the University.

Nominations and Selection Process

In addition to seeking candidates through its own member efforts, the Awards Committee will seek and welcome nominations from others. A record of the names and accomplishments of nominees will be maintained for review. A standard nomination form devised by the Committee will be available upon request to those wishing to make nominations. The number and frequency of awards is left to the discretion of the Awards Committee, but an average of one award per year is recommended.

Ceremony

The recipients of the University of Delaware Merit Award will be honored at an annual Awards Banquet at which recipients of other University awards are also recognized. The Merit Award will not be awarded posthumously or in absentia. If the recipient cannot attend the Awards Banquet, presentation of the Award may be deferred to a subsequent year, or scheduled for another appropriate ceremonial occasion, such as Commencement or Honors Day.

Award

The Merit Award will consist of a small sculpture typical in some way of the State or the University, perhaps a replica of Parks' Blue Hen, and a Certificate suitably inscribed and signed by the President of the University.

FRANCIS ALISON FACULTY AWARD

Purpose and Criteria

The Francis Alison Faculty Award is given to that faculty member of the University of Delaware who has made notable contributions to his/her field of study.
Eligibility

The candidate must be a current full-time faculty member.

Awards Committee

The Awards Committee shall be the Committee on Faculty Honors of the Faculty Senate.

Ceremony

The recipients of the Francis Alison Faculty Award will be honored at an annual Awards Banquet at which recipients of other University awards are also recognized. The Francis Alison Faculty Award will not be awarded posthumously or in absentia. If the recipient cannot attend the Awards Banquet, presentation of the Award may be deferred to a subsequent year, or scheduled for another appropriate ceremonial occasion, such as Commencement or Honors Day.

Award

The Faculty Award shall consist of a medal on a pendant chain, and a Citation suitably inscribed and signed by the President of the University.

PRESIDENT'S CERTIFICATE OF APPRECIATION

Purpose and Criteria

The President's Certificate of Appreciation is given to a person or group for services provided to the University, or for some achievement which brings prestige to the University, or for some action or task performed on behalf of the University.

Eligibility

The candidate must be a graduate or former student of the University of Delaware, or be a resident or former resident of the region served by the University of Delaware.
UNIVERSITY FACULTY SENATE

TO: University Faculty
FROM: Committee on Student and Faculty Honors
SUBJECT: Nominations for the Francis Alison Award

This award is "to be given to that faculty member of the University of Delaware who has made notable contributions to his or her field of study." To recognize the achievement and further advance the work of the recipient at the University, the award carries a grant of $5,000. The award is made when such an individual can be identified, and is not necessarily made annually.

The Committee on Student and Faculty Honors respectfully requests your assistance in carrying out its charge to so honor a faculty colleague. In accordance with the procedure approved by the University Faculty Senate, the Dean of each college will submit to our Committee the name of the one best-qualified candidate in that college (the College of Arts and Science may nominate as many as three, owing to its relatively greater size). You are encouraged to submit the names of those individuals who may have been nominated in the past.

If you believe a colleague should be considered as your college's nominee, please submit his or her name to the Dean of your college for consideration before April 15, 1992.

In considering who among your colleagues is deserving of this award for "notable contributions," notable, in the Faculty-Trustee Committee on Honorary Degrees' description of the award, may be defined against the following assessment of the Rev. Francis Alison's achievement. President Ezra Stiles of Yale called Alison, the founder of the school that developed into the University, "the greatest Classical scholar in America, especially Greek." It was said of him that "few schoolmasters (in the American colonies) ever taught a larger number of pupils who afterwards acquired such distinguished reputations," pupils like Thomas McKean and George Read of Delaware. The Committee seeks to identify those individuals in our intellectual and moral community of whom such things may one day be said.

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Appendix C
CRITERIA FOR ASSESSING EVIDENCE
FOR THE ALISON AWARD

General Criteria

"Faculty member who has made notable contributions to his or her field of study."

"Notable" is understood by reference to the Rev. Francis Alison, founder of the school that developed into the University:

"the greatest Classical scholar in America, especially Greek"

"few schoolmasters (in the American Colonies) ever taught a larger number of pupils who afterwards acquired such distinguished reputations"

Specific Kinds of Evidence

1. Impact of scholarship directly on the field (innovations, patents, insights; changed the pattern of scholarship or way of thinking in the field)

2. Recognition of scholarship by the field (number of awards; prestigious awards; sought out as speaker and consultant)

3. "Schoolmaster" to the field: impact on field via impact on students (produces graduate students who themselves make contributions to the field; affects undergraduate students who go into the field [e.g., involves them in research])

4. "Schoolmaster" at UD ( UD educational programs developed or run; impact on UD colleagues in the field; impact on scholarship of UD students [in any field])