

CEE Graduate Student Awards
Award Description and Criteria
February 29, 2008

The CEE Department honors its graduate students with three awards.

1. Outstanding Teaching Assistant Award

This award consists of an honorarium and a plaque. The award is intended to recognize a CEE graduate student who has served as an exemplary teaching assistant, as evidenced through one or both of the following:

- Providing exemplary help to students in the class as part of regular TA responsibilities, or taking the initiative to help the students above and beyond these responsibilities such as organizing special sessions or developing extra written materials for the students, and
- Providing exemplary help to the course instructor as part of regular TA responsibilities, or taking the initiative to help the instructor above and beyond these responsibilities such as finding new reference materials for the course.

All instructors of courses within the Department will be asked to submit their nominations to the Awards Committee by March 15. The nomination is limited to a single letter of two pages, maximum, written by the course instructor(s), addressing the ways in which the nominee satisfies the award criteria. No supplemental items such as written materials developed by the TA or letters from students should be submitted; any work completed by the nominee or statements by students must be described in the 2-page nomination letter. The letter may contain information about all courses in which the nominee served as a TA, including courses in other departments. Instructors of the other courses need not be co-signers of the letter. The letter may also contain information about service on department, college, or university education committees as well as outreach activities. In addition to these factors, the number of times a nominee has served as a TA for a particular course, the number of different courses served, and the number of students in classes served by the TA may all be considered when selecting the award recipient.

2. Paul P. Christiano Outstanding Service Award

This award consists of an honorarium and a plaque. The award is intended to recognize a CEE graduate student who has been of exemplary service to the Department through various activities such as one or more of the following:

- Providing considerable assistance to individual students, faculty, or staff in the Department
- Contributing to the operation of the Department, e.g., through membership on committees or participation in service projects, and
- Helping the Department become a more pleasant place to work by promoting a positive atmosphere.

Paul P. Christiano (1942-2001) was an alumnus (B.S., M.S., and Ph.D.) and a faculty member in Civil Engineering at Carnegie Tech/Carnegie Mellon. He was an expert in structural and geotechnical engineering, and led the graduate program in these areas. He served as CEE Department Head from 1986-1989, Dean of Engineering from 1989-1991, and Provost of the University from 1991-2000.

All students, faculty, and staff will be asked to submit their nominations to the Awards Committee by March 15 each year. The nomination is limited to a single letter of two pages, maximum. No supplemental written materials such as testimonials from others should be submitted; rather all evidence of how the individual satisfies the criteria of the award should be described in the 2-page nomination letter. Activities outside as well as inside the Department may be included in the letter. The letter must be signed by one individual responsible for the nomination; other individuals may be co-signers of the letter.

For both the Outstanding TA Award and the Paul P. Christiano Outstanding Service Award, the CEE Awards Committee will consider all individuals nominated, and will take responsibility for selecting the winner of each award. The names of the winners will be presented to the full CEE faculty for confirmation. Both awards will be given at the annual CEE Department graduation exercises.

The original text for the Outstanding TA Award and the Paul P. Christiano Outstanding Service award was approved by the CEE faculty on January 25, 2008. Changes in deadline dates were approved by the CEE faculty on February 29, 2008.

3. Mao Yisheng Outstanding Dissertation Award

This award, named in honor of Dr. Mao Yisheng who was the first recipient of a PhD from the Carnegie Institute of Technology in 1921, was established in 2006 by the faculty of the Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering to recognize a PhD recipient in CEE who has written an excellent dissertation describing innovative civil and environmental engineering research that is likely to have significant impact, as did the dissertation and career of Mao Yisheng.

The award consists of an honorarium and a plaque.

Selection Process

The official dissertation submission deadline in the College of Engineering at Carnegie Mellon is 10 days before May graduation. Thus, all Ph.D. dissertations in CEE at Carnegie Mellon submitted after the dissertation submission date in the previous year, and on or before the dissertation submission date in the current year, are eligible for consideration for this award given in the current year.

Eligible dissertations to be considered for this award must be identified as award quality by the PhD dissertation committee (i.e., the one that examines the candidate and approves the dissertation). Once identified as award quality, the advisor(s) must then submit the following items: (1) *a one page nomination memo*, addressing the criteria for the award, and describing the innovative and important aspects of the dissertation, (2) the Table of Contents of the thesis, (3) the abstract of the thesis, and (4) a list of publications resulting from the thesis, including journal papers, conference papers, book chapters, or other reports. The list of publications must include the full bibliographic citation with final author list, and must show clearly the status of each paper (whether still in review or accepted for publication if not yet published). In cases of conference papers, book chapters, and reports, the list should include a statement about whether the publication is peer reviewed.

The nomination packages are collected by the CEE Graduate Coordinator and distributed to the Awards Committee, which consists of faculty from each of the three groups in CEE (EESM, AIS, MMC). The Awards Committee convenes *after* the dissertation submission deadline to ensure that advisors have had a chance to nominate their student's thesis for the award. At the Awards Committee meeting, the nomination packages are discussed and a winner is selected on the basis of the four selection criteria below.

The award is presented at the CEE graduation ceremony, whether the candidate is present or not. The award recipient is notified ahead of time and asked to attend the ceremony to receive their award if possible.

Selection Criteria

The following criteria are used to select the recipient of this award from the eligible dissertations.

Criteria 1. Extent to which the thesis is well written and well organized, as determined by viewing the Table of Contents and possibly the full thesis, if the Awards Committee wishes to view the full thesis.

Criteria 2. Extent to which the abstract is thorough, complete, and comprehensible.

Criteria 3. Quality of the publications that resulted from the thesis. This can be judged by the quality of the journal or conference for papers already accepted for publication, citations of the paper by others (for papers published at least 1-2 years earlier), and any "outstanding paper" awards given by recognized organizations. In assessing the quality of the publications resulting from the thesis, the Awards Committee cannot consider papers in preparation nor written plans to publish parts of the thesis later. Only publications officially submitted by the time of the Awards Committee meeting can be included in the selection criteria.

Criteria 4. Impact of the thesis. The impact should be clearly discussed in the one page nomination statement written by the advisor. Evidence of impact can include brief arguments about ways in which the student's work extends our understanding of the topic, possible implications of the work for the research community or for policy, and invitations the student has received to present his or her work at other institutions or at conferences. Discussions of the student's work by others can also be used as evidence of impact.

Note that the nomination process cannot begin unless the thesis committee approves the thesis as being of *award quality*. Such a statement should be included in the memo written by the advisor submitted for approval at a CEE faculty meeting, or in a subsequent memo to the CEE faculty written by the advisor after getting the approval of the full dissertation committee.

***The original text for this award was approved by the CEE faculty on September 1, 2006.
Revisions in the description were approved by the CEE faculty on February 29, 2008.***

