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Kimberly Turner Wins Academic Senate Award for Outstanding Graduate Mentor

Award recognizes Turner for outstanding research and career mentorship to Mechanical Engineering graduate students



[Kimberly Turner](#), professor and chair of the [Mechanical Engineering](#) department at UCSB, was recently awarded the Outstanding Graduate Mentor Award by the [Academic Senate](#). The award for Outstanding Graduate Mentor Award is given in recognition of the contributions of faculty who offer exemplary mentoring of their graduate students, which is a vital component of the mission of a research university.

Graduate student mentoring includes training graduate students for careers in research and teaching and preparing them to meet the highest professional and ethical standards as scholars and educators. Mentoring of graduate students is in addition to a professor's other obligations, such as teaching, research, and service to the university.

Professor Kimberly Turner is current chair and has been a member of the faculty in the Department of Mechanical Engineering since in 1999. While rising quickly first to Associate Professor (in 2004) and then to full Professor (2008), Professor Turner has earned a reputation as an outstanding educator and researcher. From the outset, her excellent advising of graduate students has also distinguished her as an extraordinary mentor. She has chaired 15 PhD and 3 Masters committees, and she currently support 6-8 PhD candidates. She has served as a committee member for another 25 PhD candidates and two Masters students.

Professor Turner is known to be a dedicated advisor who places a high value on time spent personally developing the research and professional skills of her students. One of her students offers the following personal testimonial: "While many graduate students come in with plans and ideas, I started off timidly, unsure of my place and how to form a research plan. Dr. Turner demystified grad school for me, which was no small task. By meeting with her every week and discussing my ideas, I slowly gained the confidence to formulate my own research questions and methods."

Several of Professor Turner's supporters make note of the collaborative and cooperative atmosphere of her research group. One of her students writes that "[Professor] Turner strongly encourages her students to work together and to make good use of each other's intelligence. She believes a good team player is one of the most important keys to success."

Finally, many of her letters of support make particular mention of the diversity of her research groups and specifically the proportion of female students. One of her students comments, "She actively encourages diversity within our group, in particular by recruiting women and non-traditional students, creating a more balanced work environment that benefits all of us; an emphasis on collaboration among the group helps each of us feel like a valued member of the team." Another writes, "As a female graduate student in the College of Engineering, I can say that having a strong female mentor is invaluable; Dr. Turner has more than fulfilled this role from the very beginning, helping me navigate both academic and work-environment obstacles with grace."

For her dedication and exemplary mentorship of graduate students Professor Kimberly Turner is awarded an Outstanding Graduate Mentor Award. Congratulations, Professor Turner!

Images



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[Q&A with Kimberly Turner \(Convergence, 2008\)](#)

[Kimberly Turner featured in Diversity/Careers Magazine](#)
