**Nominating Statement**

I met the Nominee in 2009 when I was curriculum committee chair, and he was a new hire at the college and the only full-time faculty person in the drama department.  It was when we were phasing in an integrated course outline of record (COOR) and all the COORs were going to need to be rewritten.  Needless to say, most faculty were unenthusiastic about this task, and then there was the Nominee.  As an excited brand-new hire, where anything was possible, he took this opportunity reconstruct the drama department by redesigning the program and rewriting every COOR on the new integrated COOR form and his COORs become a model for other departments.

Since the first day that I met Nick, he has been an example for teachers to follow.  Just this semester, at the All College Day President’s meeting (the day before the semester starts for students), the President of the college chose one faculty’s work to share as a model of creativity, and that was the Nominee.  The President shared a story about the Nominee.

It was March 2020, and the college would be closing due to COVID 19.  The President ran into the Nominee, and said, “I am so sorry your students won’t be able to perform the play they worked so hard on” And the Nominee replied, “That’s okay, that only means we get to be more creative”.

At the All College Meeting, the Nominee shared how he worked through COVID 19 protocols and taught himself film making so this diverse group of students could still write an original piece and perform it, but instead of it being a play, it became a film.  Many colleagues were inspired by both his efforts and the opportunity to build student learning and success.

Since his first day the Nominee has used that creativity to go above and beyond in supporting student success.

**Implementing effective teaching and learning strategies**

I was fortunate to get to evaluate the Nominee, and what I witnessed was an inspirational class and professor. The nominee pushed the students to go as far as they could, to be vulnerable and to stretch, and did so in the most dynamic, kind and supportive way. I felt honored to get to observe such a skillful and master teacher.

As the drama department is small, it requires collaboration from all to put forth a production.  Due to this collaborative environment, students learn each part of producing a play, from set design to costumes, to lighting. Due to this 360 degrees of theater education, students evolve into leadership roles sometimes in areas of theater they did not realize they had an interest in.  Through the innovative coursework and built-in project leadership, students leave the program with marketable skills.

Since 2015, the nominee partnered with one of our feeder high schools with the highest dropout rate, lowest transfer rate to our college, and a 95% student of color population. The nominee teaches his drama class to 70 high schools seniors for college credit.   On Monday Wednesdays and Fridays after lunch you will find the nominee teaching his course in the library without a chalk or white board. He arrives 2 hours early to meet with students and set up the classroom with easel paper taped to the walls containing the key concepts of the day.  This commitment to these high school students has increased the transfer rate from this high school to our institution.

**Fostering student engagement in campus life**

Our college has a very diverse body of students and the nominee sees that as the department’s greatest strength. He caters the season to celebrate the cultures of the students in the classroom by selecting multi-cultural plays designed to highlight the student’s talents.  Since 2009, all of the productions held at LMC have

been multi-cultural or colorblind casted.  Another highlight of the department is the commitment to student written work, which has received national acclaim.  Students in the program not only see representation by the shows selected, their voices are actually represented by having their own written words live on the stage.  This has led the department to become so incredibly strong that it has one of the top reputations of community colleges in the nation.

**Facilitating student access, retention, and success**

Here are just some of the examples of regional and national acclaim and how it has led to student success:

* Through participation in the Kennedy Center American College Theater Festival (KCACTF), he has taken 20-30 students each year and many have received scholarships upwards of $20,000 to attend schools outside of California.  Many of them accepted that opportunity.
* The department’s 2013 production of Fences by August Wilson was a regional finalist at the Kennedy Center American College Theatre Festival.  In order to prepare for this the nominee partnered with the City to use their 350 seat theater and performed the play to packed houses.  Following the performance at the KCACTF Festival, all the students involved in the production were offered scholarships and job opportunities.
* In 2015 one of his students approached him with a hip-hop musical called *My Block*.  He spent the rest of the year helping the student develop the show.  When the show opened, the community lined up around the block and the show sold out each performance.  The show would later be invited to KCACTF and received the Hip-Hop Playwrighting Award from the John F Kennedy Center in Washington DC.  The students were flown out to Washing DC to perform the show and received workshops all week from Tony Award winning artists.

**Creating an inclusive and supportive campus climate**

In 2014 he directed the Pulitzer Prize winning play *Ruined*and brought departments from all over the college, the City, and used funds from an innovation grant to create 15 educational events and guest speakers based around the topics of the play.  The events and show were so successful that each year after that it evolved into the Equity Speaker Series.

The Equity Speaker series has now become institutionalized and produces over 20 events every year based around the themes of the department's production and aligned with the college’s Equity values.  The nominee collaborates with departments from across the college and community leaders to develop the year's programming.  For example, for the student written play *Reality Check* that had themes of transgender persecution the nominee reached out to the LGBTQ+ faculty leaders who created an LGBTQ+ comedy show. The LGBTQ+ community now regularly produces programming for the Equity Speaker Series.  The nominee also worked with students who created the campus’ first transgender day of reemergence to honor those who were victims of hate crimes.

In 2015, our college received Student Equity Plan funding, we wanted to start the college off with professional development that would change hearts, as we knew we needed to change hearts to change minds.  We were planning a full day of professional development and needed a keynote speaker.  Based on the nominees work with Equity and student success, we asked the nominee to be the keynote speaker.  Hi developed a one person show where he played a myriad of students, teachers and also gave us a glimpse into his own life as a student of color.

Just this last month, the nominee was one of four Academic Senators to draft the Antiracism statement passed by the Academic Senate.

I appreciate the ASCCC’s consideration of this exemplary nominee for the Stanback-Stroud Diversity Award.