

2010-11 Excellence Award Nominee: Assistant Professor Achala Chatterjee
Faculty Chair for the Water Supply Technology and Engineering Departments, Science Division
11th March 2011

Dear Faculty/Staff Awards Celebration Committee and Campus Community:

It is my privilege to nominate my faculty colleague, Assistant Professor Achala Chatterjee, for the 2010-11 Excellence Award. Achala has been a full-time faculty member within the Water Supply Technology (WST) and Engineering Departments on the SBVC Campus since the spring 2005 semester and earned tenure in spring 2009. She has served as the faculty chair for these departments since the fall of 2010. In addition, she has served as the Curriculum Committee Co-Chair and Chair since the fall of 2008. She brings her years of experience as an engineer within the Army Corps of Engineers to bear on the WST and Engineering programs. Not only does she possess the necessary expertise to teach and train her students, but also seeks the most qualified adjunct faculty from within the water and wastewater treatment industries. Thus, her WST and Engineering students receive the most rigorous education possible. Indeed, excellence is a thread that runs through her entire SBVC career.

While we are all fortunate to serve among an excellent cadre of SBVC faculty, Ms. Chatterjee deserves special recognition for several reasons. First, Achala is student centered. Each academic year, she works individually with every student in the WST degree and certificate program. This is especially impressive, as more than 250 students matriculate through this program in any given academic year. She wants to ensure that students optimize opportunities for success. During the past year, Achala has worked closely with the SBVC and Osher Foundations, as well as Southern California Edison to create additional scholarship opportunities for her WST students, further guaranteeing their academic and career success. Second, and related to the first, Ms. Chatterjee works closely with area employers, including the City of San Bernardino Water Reclamation Department. Over the years, she has developed a rigorous internship program. As a result, many of her students become employed and/or advance within the water and wastewater treatment industries. These jobs tend to pay more than area averages, thus improving the lives of students and the overall economic condition of the region.

Third, Achala works tirelessly to procure grant funding as a means to purchase needed equipment and offer innovative educational and job training programs. For example, during the current academic year, she co-authored and administered a successful \$130,000 grant through the American Recovery and Relief Act (ARRA). This career-centered program improved basic English, communication, mathematical, and WST skills for all student participants. In spite of carrying a full teaching load, chairing the Curriculum Committee, and serving as faculty chair for two programs, she successfully and expertly carried out four, 220-hour sessions of this program, beginning in June 2010 and ending in February 2011.

Fourth, Ms. Chatterjee has revised and created innovative curriculum for the WST and Engineering programs. For instance, she has integrated WST and Geographic Information Systems (GIS) programs within a novel certificate program. Her interdisciplinary approach extends to other realms, including a \$10,000 Los Angeles Municipal Water Department grant where Valley College WST, chemistry, and biology students collaborated on a reclaimed water research project. Currently, Achala is collaborating with a cohort of agencies, including City of San Bernardino Municipal Water District, Southern California Edison, Southern California Gas Company, and Sustaining Our Society, a regional non-profit redevelopment agency. This

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project endeavors to improve San Bernardino neighborhoods through education and
construction techniques that incorporate “green” and sustainable technologies. Most
importantly for SBVC, this project involves WST and Engineering students and faculty, as well
as faculty from other disciplines.

Fifth, and finally, Ms. Chatterjee has ably and professionally led the Curriculum Committee and
entire campus curriculum process since the fall 2008 semester. Not only has she assisted with the
approval of hundreds of new and revised courses and dozens of degree and certificate programs,
but also streamlined the entire *CurricUNET* and curriculum submission and approval process.
While she modestly gives credit to her Curriculum Committee colleagues, it has been her
responsibility to orchestrate the process, as well as serve as an at-large senator within the
Academic Senate. The primary responsibilities for her at-large position are to report Curriculum
Committee activities and gather feedback for her committee colleagues.

It is clear that Assistant Professor Achala Chatterjee has expertly, tirelessly, and excellently served
our campus community. Whether she is teaching WST students so that they may enter into a
rewarding career, or Engineering students so that they may transfer into four-year and graduate
programs, she does so with commitment, integrity, and enthusiasm. She works well with faculty
from across multiple disciplines, through her work within the Curriculum Committee, as well as
grant and research opportunities. She is also a steadfast liaison among SBVC campus, public
and private agencies, and the local community. Let us please reward this most deserving faculty
member, colleague, and friend with the 2010-11 Excellence Award.

Most Sincerely,

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