Dr. Alan J. McCormack (Emeritus Professor, School of Teacher Education), has been named President-Elect of the National Science Teachers Association (NSTA), the largest organization in the world committed to excellence and innovation in science teaching and learning. He will begin a three-year term beginning June 1, 2009, and will become President of the organization on June 1, 2010. NSTA is comprised of over 60,000 individuals from various science-related fields, all committed to science education. Dr. McCormack is just completing his tenure as President of the Council of Elementary Science International (CESI) and previously presided over the National Biology Teachers Association (NBTA). He also recently made a television appearance on NBC 7/39 as a promotional effort for the First Annual San Diego Science Festival in Balboa Park, demonstrating his “Dumbledore’s Transfiguration Class Show,” which he has recently performed for local schools and teacher groups.

Dr. Jessica Pierson (School of Teacher Education) has received Recognition of Merit in the 2008-09 Phi Delta Kappa International Outstanding Doctoral Dissertation Award program. Dr. Pierson received the award for her research on the impact of discourse on students’ learning in the mathematics classroom. PDK Executive Director Dr. William Bushaw was quoted as saying, “We are thrilled to honor Dr. Pierson’s important work.” The award is given to the PDK member whose dissertation best meets the criteria of sound scholarship and shows the most promise for improving education. In her research, Dr. Pierson examined the roles of classroom discourse between students and teachers in the mathematics classroom. She observed the interactions between teachers and students and found that two types of teacher dialogue can positively impact students’ learning. Teacher responsiveness—the act of trying to understand students’ thoughts by asking questions, clarifying, and building upon students’ comments—and intellectual work dialogue that is intellectually demanding, such as asking for justifications and examples, both improve students’ achievement.

Dr. Nadine Bezuk (School of Teacher Education) has been appointed to serve as a panel member of the Teaching Mathematics Advisory Panel for the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing. The advisory panel will consider the need, and propose standards, for a preparation program for the Mathematics Specialist Credential. In addition, the advisory panel will determine the mathematics needs of students across the K-12 continuum and consider modifying teacher preparation requirements to enhance students’ mathematics learning.

The University Senate will honor the 2008-09 Senate Distinguished Professor and five college awardees in a ceremony April 29. Dr. Shulamit Ritblatt (Child and Family Development) will be honored with the Excellence in Teaching Award for the College of Education. Congratulations to Dr. Ritblatt for this honor.

Dr. Karen Cadiero-Kaplan (Chair, Policy Studies in Language and Cross-Cultural Education), has won the position of Member A (one of four members elected by the affiliate leaders to serve as affiliate representatives) to the Affiliate Leadership Council (ALC) of TESOL (Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages, Inc.). Dr. Cadiero-Kaplan has been involved with the affiliate council for the past three years as the TESOL liaison to California TESOL (CATESOL), served as CATESOL president in 2006-07, and was on the executive board of CATESOL as president-elect (2005-06) and past president (2007-08). She sees the ALC as a much-needed space for affiliate leaders to be engaged in professional development across borders.