

Press Release

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Chemical Engineer from UT Austin Named SURA Distinguished Scientist

Washington, DC – The Southeastern Universities Research Association (SURA) today announced that Nicholas A. Peppas, Fletcher Stuckey Pratt Chair in Engineering, Chairman of the Department of Biomedical Engineering, and Professor of Chemical Engineering, Biomedical Engineering and Pharmacy at The University of Texas at Austin, will receive its 2010 Distinguished Scientist Award.

The annual honor goes to a research scientist whose extraordinary work fulfills the SURA mission of “fostering excellence in scientific research.” The award and its \$20,000 honorarium will be presented to Peppas on March 10, in conjunction with the SURA Board of Trustees meeting being held at Duke University in Durham, North Carolina.

“Dr. Peppas is an internationally recognized leader in biomedical and pharmaceutical engineering. As an academician and researcher, he brings great distinction to his institution, his state and our country,” said Charles W. Steger, President of Virginia Tech and Chair of the SURA Council of Presidents and Executive Committee. “SURA is very proud to honor Dr. Peppas for his accomplishments in the lab and the classroom, and the inspiration he provides for future generations of scientists.”

In his 34 year career in research, he has become a leading scientist, inventor and pacesetter in the field of drug delivery and controlled release – a field that he and MIT’s Robert Langer developed into a mature field of scholarly and applied research. According to UT Austin President William Powers, Jr., who nominated Peppas for the honor, “He is an international leader in biomaterials and bionanotechnology, and has contributed seminal work in the field of feedback-controlled biomedical devices. His contributions have been translated into more than twenty medical products with multibillion dollar markets.”

In addition to the SURA award, Peppas has been recognized with more than 120 major awards, including the Charles Stine Materials Award (1984), the William H. Walker Award (2006), the Jay Bailey Biological Engineering Award (2006), the Institute Lecture (2007), and the Founders Award (2008) – all from the American Institute for Chemical Engineering. Last year, AIChE also named him one of the top 100 most influential chemical engineers in the world. Peppas also received the ASSE Curtis McGraw Award (1988), the American Chemical Society’s Newsmaker of the Year Award (2002), the Acta Biomaterialia Gold Medal (2010) and the Zyma Foundation Award (1982). In 2006, he was elected to the National Academy of Engineering, in 2008 to the Institute of Medicine of the National Academies, and in 2005 to the National Academy of France.

President Powers also said of the nominee, “Peppas is not only an exceptional ambassador of the biomedical field, but also an eloquent teacher and educator.” Peppas has supervised 188 graduate students and visiting scientists, including 84 Ph.D.s – 36 of which are now professors at other universities. He has also directed over 650 undergraduates who have worked in his lab.

Peppas is the author of 1,075 publications, 350 proceedings papers and preprints, 320 abstracts, and 35 patents. He is the co-author or co-editor of 27 books and volumes. Further, he has given over 270 invited seminars and 900 scientific presentations in 32 countries. As an international ambassador of biomedical engineering, he has received honorary doctorates from the Universities of Ghent (Belgium), Parma (Italy), and Athens (Greece.)

The SURA Distinguished Scientist Award was established in 2006, commemorating the organization's 25th Anniversary. SURA's Relations Committee manages the solicitation, screening and selection of the recipient of this award from a SURA member institution. John Noftsinger, Vice Provost for Research and Public Service at the James Madison University, is the chair of the selection committee for SURA.

Each of SURA's 62 member institutions was eligible to make one nomination for the Distinguished Scientist Award. Last year's selection was Dr. Allen J. Bard, also with the University of Texas at Austin.

The award and honorarium will be presented to Dr. Peppas at a dinner in his honor at the Washington Duke Inn in Durham.

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The Southeastern Universities Research Association (SURA) is a consortium of over 60 leading research institutions in the southern United States and the District of Columbia established in 1980 as a non-stock, nonprofit corporation. SURA serves as an entity through which colleges, universities, and other organizations may cooperate with one another, and with government and industry in acquiring, developing, and using laboratories and other research facilities and in furthering knowledge and the application of that knowledge in the physical, biological, and other natural sciences and engineering. For more information, visit www.sura.org.