The special committee of the General Faculty to prepare a memorial resolution for Robert P. Popovich, professor, mechanical engineering, has filed with the secretary of the General Faculty the following report.

Sue Alexander Greninger, Secretary
General Faculty and Faculty Council

IN MEMORIAM
ELMIRA POPOVA

Elmira Popova grew up in Rousse, Bulgaria, placing in the top ten in the Bulgarian Mathematical Olympiad in 1980. She earned an M.S. in mathematics from the University of Sofia and a Ph.D. in operations research from Case Western Reserve University. In 1995, Elmira joined the faculty of The University of Texas at Austin as an assistant professor in the graduate program in operations research and industrial engineering in the mechanical engineering department.

Professor Popova rose through the academic ranks to professor as the Robert and Jane Mitchell Endowed Faculty Fellow in Engineering. In 1999, she received the Halliburton/Brown & Root Young Faculty Excellence Award in Teaching and Research; in 2007, she gave an invited lecture at the Isaac Newton Institute for Mathematical Sciences in Cambridge, England; and in 2008, she was named a Fulbright Scholar. During the 2010-11 academic year, Elmira served as the chair of the Graduate Assembly at the University. She also served as chair of Plenary Talks for the annual INFORMS Conference hosted in Austin in 2010. Elmira headed a joint University–Brazilian CAPES (Coordination for Enhancement of Higher Education Personnel) program, in which five faculty members and six students from Brazil visited the University to collaborate on electricity market research, and she served on editorial boards for Naval Research Logistics and IIE Transactions on operations engineering.

Graduate-level classes Elmira taught at the University include: Mathematical Statistics, Systems Simulation, Reliability Theory and Modeling, Applied Stochastic Processes, Computational Statistics, and Nuclear Safety and Security. At the undergraduate level, Elmira taught Engineering Statistics and Simulation Modeling. She advised nine Ph.D. students and 19 M.S. students at the University.

Elmira’s primary research areas were in stochastic processes, computational Bayesian statistics, and stochastic optimization. She made lasting scholarly contributions in these areas, as well as in applying her research in reliability and maintenance, electric power systems, finance, security, and molecular cancer therapeutics. Elmira combined first-rate engineering pragmatism with strong mathematical rigor in her research. She had an eight-year collaboration with the risk management group at South Texas Project Nuclear Operating Company on developing risk-informed models for estimating system reliability. Her research was also funded by the National Science Foundation, the Department of Energy, the Department of Homeland Security, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, and the Electric Power Research Institute.

Elmira is deeply missed by her University colleagues, friends, and students.

This memorial resolution was prepared by a special committee consisting of Professors David Morton (chair), J. Wesley Barnes, and John Hasenbein.

Distributed to the dean of the College of Engineering on June 17, 2013, and posted under “Memorials” at http://www.utexas.edu/faculty/council/.