

Faculty Senate Office
Oviatt Library, Room 10, MC 8221.

Dear Senators,

I am writing your selection committee in support of Jerry Schutte and his nomination for the CSUN outstanding teaching award. I consider it a great honor to have the opportunity to introduce such a strong candidate to your selection committee, especially after the numerous stories that I have heard about his teaching and based on my experiences with him as a colleague, mentor and as one of his many professional admirers. To assist in your evaluation of his nomination and qualifications, this letter will focus on three critical areas: his teaching activities, his mentorship of our students, and most importantly, his suitability for this teaching award. I believe this format will help you evaluate this candidate and in the process learn to respect him as I have over the last ten years.

Teaching activities:

Jerry has been very successful throughout his teaching career. His very high standards and equally impressive student evaluations are just several measures of that success. I have personally observed the impact of his instructing abilities in a challenging subject like statistics where students and colleagues alike are awed by his ability to make the subject understandable and relevant for our students. In particular, his engagement with the sociological imagination is outstanding and I believe he would be an excellent example for our organization to choose as its honoree for the award. I believe students and faculty alike would agree – we are honored by his contributions to this community, this university, and our department.

Mentoring:

Jerry works well with students and mentors them in the classroom and out. To me this is the most important aspect of what we do as teachers, showing our students what it is to teach by example and demonstrating what it is to be an educated adult with social and community responsibilities. In several cases I know of, this is the most often cited reason for his being admired by our students – his mentorship of them, their careers, and their understanding of two of our most difficult subjects – statistics and research methods. In Jerry's case he is an outstanding example for them to follow and he has dedicated his whole career to this endeavor – thankfully he is their, and our, role model.

Suitability for teaching award:

Jerry is extremely intelligent, personable and hard working. Students and colleagues alike admire his work ethic and his ability to make tough subjects accessible – for example his development of joint classes in methods and stats that are offered in non-traditional formats - Saturday or even Sunday timeslots to help our working adult population. He is one of the most hard working and dedicated faculty in our department and brings a wealth of experience to our classrooms. He holds high standards for his students while maintaining his empathy for their hard work and dedication to getting an education.

He does what I personally admire most, meets our students where they come from and takes them where they need to go academically to be successful. Additionally, students love his style, his teaching philosophy and they respect his teaching methods. He is not an easy A, rather he is one who promotes learning. The students state that he provides them with motivation to be better – an outstanding complement for an outstanding educator.

In conclusion, I strongly recommend Jerry Schutte for this well-deserved honor. He is a rare find for a university seeking good colleagues to recognize: a professional who can demonstrate by example a well rounded education, mature focus on career and instill a hunger for knowledge in students. In short he is a teacher of the highest quality and caliber.

Sincerely,

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