

California State University, Northridge  
Northridge, CA 91330-8376

March 2, 2012

To Whom It May Concern,

This is a letter of recommendation for Dr. Jerald Schutte in support of his nomination for the 2012 CSUN Faculty Senate “Distinguished Teaching, Counseling, or Librarianship” Award. Please accept my strongest recommendation for Jerry.

I first became acquainted with Jerry soon after the 1994 Northridge earthquake. He and several other colleagues offered to teach online because our campus was physically devastated, most traditional instruction took place subsequently in borrowed trailers, and nobody was quite sure what the future held. (As an administrator then I helped manage some of the IT and logistical processes that supported those nascent but crucial new teaching and learning modalities.) If notable citations of early research streams are germane to earning a reputation as a Distinguished Professor, here’s one in support Jerry’s nomination: Professor Philip Stark at UC Berkeley refers to Jerry’s 1996 pioneering work in the measurement and management of online classes in his required class readings for a course in introductory statistics. See:

<http://www.stat.berkeley.edu/~stark/SticiGui/Text/experiments.htm>

I’ll briefly discuss three areas that Jerry excels in: student sensitivity, strategic thinking, and IT leadership.

I recently had an undergraduate student in one of my Management classes afflicted with deep personal issues. I could tell from the student’s questions in class that the student was indeed an insightful student, and further, had the talent to succeed in graduate school. When I found out that the student was a Sociology major—not a Business major—I immediately sent the student to Jerry for advice and counsel (as I recall, the student wasn’t even enrolled in any of Jerry’s classes). Working together we helped the student address her issues, and matriculate rapidly. This sounds simple but isn’t—inter-College, robust nurture on an individual basis for a campus of 37,000 students is likely not the norm in our complex bureaucracy. However, I knew in advance from my various chats with Jerry that he would not only be available and accessible for a deep student-led discussion, he could help the student design an academic and professional success plan.

There is a well-known book in the field of management titled “The Mind of a Strategist.” Jerry manifests “the mind of a strategist” in multiple areas of academic life. In every IT

or resource-related meeting I have ever attended in the CSU—i.e., various CSUN committees and up-and-down the State—Jerry is the one I look to first to see what topics matter, and the one I look to last to see how to turn new knowledge into an action. He and I have had informal chats about the future of statistical literacy in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, pedagogy and statistical computing, open source software, LMSs, unit-credit evaluation, optimal calendaring, budgets, IT organizational design, and of course, the best classroom use and online use of digital technology. His thinking and action in these areas is at least 5-10 years ahead of my own—to be frank, I deliberately bounce ideas off of him so as to refine my own strategic direction. Many professionals cannot envisage technology 10 years ahead, and many academics cannot articulate high-value student learning outcomes 10 years ahead—Jerry can estimate when we’ll get there, what the persistent value is as aligned with our teaching and research mission, and which supporting processes will need to change in order to get us there. There are some seasoned executives of Fortune 200 firms that struggle with these areas of organizational life.

Finally, as I write this, the Faculty Senate Executive Committee is considering a proposal for a seventh faculty award tentatively titled “The Innovation and Leadership in Academic Technology” award. (Alternatively, the committee may add academic technology-infused language to the existing six awards.) I spearheaded the proposed award with the full support of the Academic Technology Committee. While I had a number of faculty in mind from my 30 years on this campus, it should be clear from this letter of recommendation that I reflected on Jerry’s continuing contribution to his students and his professional community as I penned each sentence of the proposed award. Put simply, Jerry was the model in my mind that prefigured the spirit and letter of the proposed award in IT leadership.

Again, please accept my strongest recommendation for Jerry. I have learned much from him *especially* with respect to 1), “continuous re-transformation” of the student-faculty relationship, and 2), clarity as to which academic technological interventions offer which kinds of value in which contexts. Please be assured that Jerry crafts and nurtures world-class student-professionals that will succeed in a number of intellectual, economic, and social areas.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you require additional information.

Cordially,



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