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Herman Debose, Chair  
Department of Sociology  
California State University at Northridge

Dear Dr. Debose:

It has come to my attention that Prof. Jerry Schutte has been nominated for the CSUN Distinguished Teaching Award for 2011-12. In this regard, it is truly my pleasure to write a letter of recommendation on his behalf.

Prof. Schutte is one of the finest teachers I have ever had. I took his Statistics class, Soc. 364/497, this past fall. Being mathematically challenged, I honestly believe I would not have passed this class if I had any other teacher for this difficult subject. In the class preceding this one, I found it tortuously boring and intimidating, but his simplified approach to teaching and use of technology made it very interesting, understandable and engaging. Sitting in his class for six hours on Sunday actually became an event I looked forward to each week.

Since then, I'm truly dazzled by the things I encounter on a day to day basis that I learned. It's like I've now been admitted to "the club." I realize that all these things were going on all along, only I didn't speak the language and didn't know that I didn't know. The most blatant example of this is when I was watching a TV show and they said something to the effect that *it's a zero-sum game; one guy's star is rising while the other is diminishing* .... I just about fell over: I actually knew what they were talking about. The thing that really struck me was that this was a re-run which I had seen before, and this comment had completely passed over my head. I was so blown away! I find myself viewing things more critically.

Prof. Schutte's tireless efforts and genuine commitment to his students are the reasons that my classmates and I echo each other when we sing his praises. He really cares about each of his students and wants us to succeed. He was always saying, "We don't leave anyone behind in this class" and to ensure this, he made himself available for office hours every Friday evening from 6:00 to 7:30 and encouraged everyone to attend, whether or not you had a specific question. I always attended because I learned so much from other people's questions as well as my own. But he went way beyond the call of duty during finals. He held office hours every night during that week to help us with our questions and go over the material.

In closing, I would like to say that it is his dedication and caring that made the difference for me. He deserves this award for his tireless efforts and genuine commitment to his students.

Sincerely,  
Kathy Somerfield