

February 27, 2012

Faculty Senate
Committee on Distinguished Teaching,

I offer this letter, in my position as Dean of the College of Social and Behavioral Sciences, to support Professor Jerald Schutte, in his nomination for Distinguished Teacher of the Year at California State University, Northridge for 2011-12. Professor Schutte is both an esteemed colleague and friend that has demonstrated, over the years, a commitment to excellence in the classroom. Evidence of this commitment is seen by his innovation in delivery, format, process and content.

Few of his colleagues know that Professor Schutte was an undergraduate associate at the Western Data Processing Center at UCLA in 1969, the year that institution gave birth to the internet. Perhaps even fewer know that Professor Schutte consulted with IBM, while on the faculty at Columbia University in 1976, the year before the Personal PC was borne, in which he argued that computing, to be effective, must be localized and networked for interpersonal communication. Or that in 1994, he met and negotiated with Toshiba to produce what would have been the first "tablet" based PC.

I give you this background so that you will understand why in 1995 Professor Schutte, in giving a lecture to the faculty on the future of personal computing, befriended and forged an alliance with John Hertzog, then head of the Learning Resource Center, who together effectively lobbied then President Wilson and subsequently Provost Kennedy of CSUN, to establish what turned out to be one of the nation's first test of an internet based teaching strategy. Professor Schutte's participation in the "Cyber Seven" evolved into a decade long examination of pedagogy. Not only has he been an early adopter for online and hybrid teaching technology, but more importantly, has been an advocate for the assessment in each of these venues.

In testing the efficacy of such content delivery, he also has been every mindful of the demographics of the CSUN working student population. He was among the first to offer early morning (6:30 am) classes, one of the first to offer Saturday classes and more recently the first to offer a Sunday class in the college, each of which has more than exceeded enrollment targets. Moreover, he has done so in a "blended" format in which two of the department's core classes (social statistics and research methods) are taught together, thus allowing graduating

seniors to matriculate without having to come back for another semester. This, in no small part, is effectively impacting sociology majors graduation rates.

As well, he was innovated with the structure of the classroom; in 2004 he requested renovation of Sierra Hall 180 a college computer lab to a facility that people external to the campus often refer to as a "state of the art" computer laboratory. It spawned use of the first "Symposium", the first in class based LAN for student discussion and polling and the first use of wireless routers on campus. These innovations were in large measure directly linked to Professor Schutte's vision and creativity.

Professor Schutte's innovation goes beyond technology, however. His student surveys engage and connect research with practical policy changes at the university. His networked study procedure assures that no student is without adequate tutoring and study support. And his work with online testing has resonated with the administration engaging dialogue and providing implications in processing, for example, the writing proficiency exam which all CSUN students must take.

As a result of his dedication to teaching he has engendered the admiration and support of his students. His classes are consistently evaluated a near 5.0. More importantly, however, the informal comments, praising his efforts, are testament to his dedication and concern for the well being of his students.

As an administrator, I take pride in the effortlessness with which Jerry and I communicate. While we do not always agree, his thoughtfulness, civility and tenacity make it a pleasure to have him as a faculty member in CSBS and an asset in the teaching mission of CSUN.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S. Theodoulou', written in a cursive style.

Stella Theodoulou, Dean
Social and Behavioral Sciences