

3-7-2012

Dear Member of the Faculty Senate Awards Committee:

I highly recommend Dr. Jerald Schutte for the 2012 Distinguished Teaching Award.

The reasons are:

1. Consistently teaches at the graduate level: Dr. Schutte is the only faculty member in the field of quantitative sociology at California State University, Northridge who continuously carries out the difficult task of teaching graduate level Research Methods and Social Statistics. Many instructors find these to be difficult and time-consuming classes to teach. But not Dr. Schutte. Dr. Schutte received his Ph.D. from the University of California, Los Angeles in the 1970s and one can only imagine the changes he has seen as well as the challenges he has faced learning the updated statistical materials and computer software packages. Dr. Schutte takes the difficult task of working patiently with students, and he leads them from one step to another until they finally understand difficult advanced concepts such as Log Linear Analysis and Causal Model Analysis, and advanced methods in social research.
2. Trained Ph.D. students: As one graduate Ph.D. student said: "My knowledge and understanding of statistics and social research methodology were shaped by Dr. Schutte's expert training at both the undergraduate and graduate stages of my development, training that was sufficient to provide me with research employment first for the state of California, then for the University of California, Riverside, and eventually for the research institute that now employs me. I am deeply fulfilled by my chosen profession, and I truly and honestly believe that this opportunity would not have been available to me were it not for the expert tutelage gained under his guidance. In this, I owe a great part of my career to Dr. Jerald Schutte. My debt and gratitude extend beyond the career opportunities he has provided me, however. My chosen area of substantive expertise is social psychology, an interest sparked in me by classes taken with Dr. Schutte. Specifically, Dr. Schutte's great passion and intellectual affinity towards the theories of cognitive consistency sparked in me a (thus-far) lifelong interest in the mechanics of cognition, with specific focus on the role of gestalt and consistency/comparison processes. This interest was no passing fancy, but rather acted as the foundation for my very career, serving as the basis for my first master's thesis (an examination of how people respond to consistency/uniformity in music, now a published book), my second master's thesis (an examination of the role consistency plays in the experience of amusement, currently in the R&R stage at a peer-reviewed journal), and my Ph.D. dissertation, entitled "A Revised Theory of Cognitive Consistency" (currently under manuscript development). One can show few clearer examples of the influence one professor can have on the development and direction of student's intellectual interests. One can find even fewer examples of a student more grateful. In this, I owe a great part of my intellectual life to Dr. Jerald Schutte."

His mentorship and guidance over the years has helped many students find satisfying and lucrative jobs and careers.

3. Pioneer in online/hybrid teaching: Dr. Schutte arguably is the first professor on campus who carried out online/hybrid teaching. In an experimental design on the comparison of online and class teaching, an experimental design was carried out during the Fall, 1996 in which 33 students in a Social Statistics course at California State University, Northridge were randomly divided into two groups, one taught in a traditional classroom and the other taught virtually on the World Wide Web. Text, lectures and exams were standardized between the conditions. Contrary to the proposed hypotheses, quantitative results demonstrated the virtual class scored an average of 20% higher than the traditional class on both examinations. Further, post-test results indicate the virtual class had significantly higher perceived peer contact, and time spent on class work.

Although the above sample is very small and cannot be used as inferential statistics to a large student population on campus, Dr. Schutte's sincere attitude toward teaching and gaining the first hand knowledge on online teaching is admirable.

4. Creative teaching: When I was hired in 1994, Social Statistics and Social Research Methods were taught separately and many students could not retain the statistics they learned and apply it to research methods. They had difficulty digesting quantitative sociology research publications as well, because they had forgotten much of the statistics they had previously learned. A few years later Dr. Schutte combined Social Statistics and Research Methods into a sequential class that required the students to take them simultaneously. In doing so, the statistics the students learned in class could immediately be applied to the research methods when their memories were still fresh. Dr. Schutte's innovation has created a very successful class.

Dr. Schutte has conceived and implemented many innovative teaching methods over the past 40 years and his passion for teaching has set the standard for the university community. I believe Dr. Schutte is one of the most innovative and responsible professors on campus.

Sincerely Yours,

Wendy Wang
Professor in Sociology