

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 21st 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,



Wayne Smith, Ph.D.

Lecturer

Department of Management

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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,

James David Ballard, Ph.D.

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March 1, 2012

To Whom It May Concern,

As the former Lead Faculty in Academic Technology, I am writing this letter of recommendation for Dr. Jerry Schutte, who has been nominated for the 2012 Distinguished Teaching Award. I have known Dr. Schutte a little over ten years, during which time I had the honor of collaborating with him to improve teaching effectiveness and increase student engagement and learning outcomes using technology. I've also had the pleasure of serving on numerous committees with him, including Educational Resources Committee where he led the efforts to better meet our working students' needs by exploring alternative scheduling of classes and special Technology Taskforce to examine learning management systems for best practices in teaching and learning.

He is one of the pioneering faculty who used technology to improve student engagement and learning outcome in academically demanding classes with high failure rate, specifically in Social Statistics and Research Methodology courses. He created reusable learning objects and made his lectures and problem-solving exercises available on demand, 24/7, providing linguistically and culturally diverse students with much needed opportunities for repeated exposures and individualized tutorials. Such thoughtful and innovative online learning materials helped his students realize their learning success. He is also one of the first faculty to experiment with the Clickers as a way to increase student engagement and better monitor student learning outcome in his large lecture classes.

More importantly, he sets high expectations and standards for his students who are, by and large, first in their family to go to college, and he treats them as fellow researchers and scholars. He makes learning meaningful for his students by generating research questions that address the real educational and social problems from their every day lives. He demonstrates how best to conduct research and communicate research findings to wide audiences, ranging from highly technical to the general public. He encourages and enables his students to think like social scientists and researchers through careful scaffolding and apprenticeship. He makes them believe in themselves. His devotion and commitment to student learning success is clearly evidenced in stellar student evaluation of faculty—an average of 5 across courses, over time—and the long waiting list of students wanting to add his classes. He is well-respected and sought-after by his students.

With the same level of enthusiasm he teaches and supports his students in their learning, he also willingly shares his knowledge and wisdom in teaching and learning with his colleagues, mentoring new and seasoned faculty in his department and college, as well as those across the colleges and disciplines.

Many faculty have benefitted greatly by working alongside him, and some even had the good fortune of receiving his mentorship, reaping great successes in student learning outcome. Dr. Schutte has been and continues to be a true inspiration for his students and for us educators. He is truly a Distinguished Teacher well deserving of CSUN's 2012 Distinguished Teaching Award.

Sincerely,

Sandra B. Chong

Sandra B. Chong, Ph.D.

Professor, Elementary Education

March 5, 2012

California State University Northridge
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Northridge, California 91330-8221

RE: Distinguished Teaching Award, Letter of Support

Dear Award Committee Members:

It is with the deepest sense of honor and privilege that I write this letter in support of Dr. Jerald Schutte for the Distinguished Teacher Award. I have known Jerry for more than 16 years, during which time, he has been my professor on three separate occasions, graduate mentor, and is now a faculty colleague, and most importantly, a friend. Needless to say, I have had the unique opportunity to both experience and witness Jerry's infectious passion and devotion for teaching.

I would wager that within an instant, most of us can recall that favorite teacher in their lifetime. Any teacher reading this letter has probably been especially cared for, pushed, or inspired by at least one teacher — a teacher you have remembered throughout your life and into your teaching career. For me, that teacher is Jerry. Quite simply, Jerry is a remarkable professor, whose charisma in the classroom and devotion to the profession is surpassed only by the longevity of his lessons. In fact, it is with rare exception that you will find a person, who so easily incites in his students an exuberance for learning and fosters an insatiable intellectual fervor. Furthermore, his command of the discipline makes him an extraordinary scholar, capable of presenting the most complex and abstract concepts in a manner that is both understandable and intellectually palatable. Keep in mind that we are talking about a professor whose teaching assignments consist of the most difficult courses for sociology majors such as quantitative statistics and quantitative research methods. For example, how often do you hear students walk away from a course that they “knew” they would fail, only to discover that what once appeared unintelligible, is now simply a new paradigm in thinking- oriented toward science, logic, and rationality. A

transformation so profound, that its affect can only be measured in perpetuity; an awakening of sorts.

As a colleague, Jerry's devotion to the department and wider campus community is both expansive and constant. In fact, innovations and changes to the campus environment from his influence are immutable. For example, a short conversation with any presidential cabinet member will reveal both the breadth and scope of changes set in motion by Jerry's enduring engagement on committees, faculty forums, academic presentations, scholarly publications, and research work completed at the request of high-level administrators. The following is just a small sample of topical areas of which Jerry has helped shape policy and direct resources: curriculum, course scheduling, information technology, web design, pedagogy, departmental politics, faculty contracts, space allocation, personnel, and student success ratios.

In closing, it is with sincere conviction that I enthusiastically recommend that Dr. Jerald Schutte be selected as a recipient of the Distinguished Teacher Award. It would be a great tribute to a man, who is so deserving of public praise.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Dominic Little', with a large, stylized loop at the end.

Dominic Little
ITC II & Faculty