

February 23, 2012

Herman DeBose, Chair  
Department of Sociology

Dear Dr. DeBose,

I am writing this letter in support of Dr. Jerald Schutte, the distinguished professor of sociology at California State University, Northridge. Dr. Schutte was a professor of mine during both my undergraduate and graduate years of schooling, and was deeply influential on my own development and direction as a sociological researcher.

I can say without reservation that I would not be where I am today without Dr. Schutte. I make my living working with a Ph.D. as a statistician and research scientist, skills that I gained and honed under the instruction of Dr. Schutte. 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.

The lessons he taught me were not all derived from books. During the first two weeks of my first class with Dr. Schutte, he and I began to form a conflictual relationship. In what was either youthful exuberance or sheer misguided conceit, I rather rudely challenged his knowledge and authority on a public class discussion page. If I remember correctly, he had not answered a question about the central limit theorem as fully as I would have preferred.

Before the next class meeting, Dr. Schutte called me into his office. He sat me down across the desk and looked at me rather seriously. He said, "Jesse, I don't think you understand the impact your opinion has

on the mood of the class as a whole. You're smart and brash, and the other students will follow your lead because of it. As a result, I can't have you causing trouble." Or something to that effect. It's more impactful when a big, bearded doctor says it to you. He continued, "I'll make you a deal. If you have any issues in the future, you come talk to me directly. My door and email account are always open; I'll answer any questions you might have, day or night."

This may seem a small issue, and in hindsight perhaps it was. But, it caused a younger me to look at myself in a new way. Dr. Schutte didn't talk down to me or reprimand me. He didn't try to reassert his authority by putting me in my place. He talked to me like an equal and showed me power I didn't know I had, while maintaining the gentle authority of professorship. He had the courage to *empower* a troublesome student, rather than trying to delegitimize their actions. In doing so, he instantly won me over and got me to try harder to do well and impress him and the students around me, a habit that spread to my other areas of my life. In this, I owe Dr. Jerald Schutte some small part of my transition into adulthood.

I bought Jerry a present when I graduated, and he wrote me a very kind and warm note. He attended my wedding. I don't stay in touch with Jerry as much as I'd like, because life is like that, but I'm deeply honored to have the chance to write this letter. The time in my life when a single individual can have such an impact on me is closing, if it hasn't closed already, and this letter is a chance for me to put down on paper what time can sometimes dim or adulterate.

I'm ostensibly writing this letter for a distinguished teacher nomination, though I'm not clear on the details. The details don't matter. Personally, I'm writing this letter to tell Jerry how much I appreciate the effect he had on my life. If someone else wants to give him an award, all the better.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Jesse Fletcher', with a stylized, flowing script.

Jesse Fletcher

February 28<sup>th</sup>, 2012

Herman DeBose, Chair  
Department of Sociology  
California State University, Northridge

Dear Dr. DeBose:

I am writing in support of the nomination of Dr. Jerald Schutte for the CSUN Distinguished Teaching Award. I am currently a doctoral student studying social psychology at University of California, Riverside. Prior to my studies at UCR, I received BA and MA degrees in Sociology from CSUN. During that time, Dr. Schutte played an invaluable role in my academic growth. As both a professor and mentor, I can honestly say that without his influence, I would not be where I am today.

As a professor, Dr. Schutte set a high standard of expectations for his students, while at the same time providing a level of support far beyond that dictated by the university. The combination of these two factors increased my self-awareness as a member of the academic community. After taking his classes, I felt confident pursuing goals which I had previously considered unattainable. In the process of demanding more of me as a student and providing the support to achieve this higher standard, I subsequently felt confident pursuing a PhD and a career in the academia after my time at CSUN ended.

As a mentor and chairperson of my MA thesis committee, a lot of the same attributes also surfaced. Dr. Schutte constantly challenged me to expand my understanding of the topic I was studying. Be it with suggestions of alternative theories and concepts, or with the introduction of different methodological tools and statistical techniques, he always pushed me (and encouraged me to push myself) to find unique and novel ways to study and understand the topic. The ability to absorb criticism as well as be critical of one's own work is a trait I have found absolutely essential in my current success. Without Dr. Schutte's instruction in this key component of academic life, my current endeavors would have been far more difficult.

In closing, during my time at CSUN, I often told fellow students that my experiences with Dr. Schutte allowed me to imagine that I was in an Ivy League university. But it is more than that. He coupled his high standards and criticism with a level of support which has been matched by few in my time at CSUN or since. Accordingly, I strongly encourage him for this award. I cannot think of anyone more deserving.

Sincerely,

Matthew Grindal

February 13, 2012

Dear Dr. Debose:

It is my pleasure to write a letter in support of Jerald Schutte's nomination for the Distinguished Teaching Award.

I was first introduced to Dr. Schutte when I took his 680 class in the Fall 2010 semester. For a student intimidated by the subject of statistics, Professor Schutte had a way of alleviating the anxiety brought on by multivariate statistical analyses and intricate SPSS outputs. His genuine concern for our success and his passion for teaching were apparent. He challenged us with high expectations, while at the same time doing whatever he could to help us achieve them. He instilled a sense of confidence in us and made it a priority to be an available resource, patiently staying well-beyond virtually every class period as to ensure he met the needs of each individual.

The positive experience I had in Dr. Schutte's 680 class resonated with me. Therefore, the following semester when I was in need of a professor to guide my independent study course, I was thrilled to hear that he was one of the faculty members who specialized in my subject. When I approached him with the favor, he did not hesitate to set aside the extra time to take me under his wing. Given the heavy workload that teachers have as it is, I was truly appreciative that Professor Schutte was willing to take on the additional task of working with me.

Dr. Schutte's guidance did not end there. He continued to advise me leading all the way up to the comprehensive exams that I took in the Fall 2011 semester. His help in my preparation for the exams was crucial to my success. If there were any way I could give back, writing this letter of support is the very least I can do to express the gratitude I have for Jerald Schutte.

In closing, I would like to express how privileged I feel to have been given the opportunity to be mentored by such an esteemed professor. As I take a look back at my academic path, Dr. Schutte is certainly a teacher that distinguishes himself from the rest.

Sincerely,

Stephanie Kimberling

Sarah Luery  
Student ID No. 103642017  
February 22, 2012

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

Dear Dr. Debose,

I was pleased to find out that Dr. Jerry Schutte has been nominated for the CSUN Distinguished Teaching Award for 2011-2012. I think he is very deserving of this award and so below please find my letter of support on his behalf.

I had the privilege of having Jerry last semester for the graduate level advanced statistics course and I thought that he was an inspirational instructor. He has the ability to explain concepts in various ways, as well as the patience to stick by our side until we finally reach our own understanding of the complex subject matter.

I was impressed with the way he incorporated technology into our curriculum, from his course website that contained various instructional links and enabled us to keep organized on our assignments, to the use of the virtual lab that gave us round-the-clock access to SPSS and AMOS.

I know that the advanced statistics class was recently added to the sociology graduate curriculum, and I am grateful to Jerry for the training I received in this subject area. It was one of the more challenging classes I've taken, in terms of subject matter, but I thought that Jerry gave us the tools we needed to be successful through his lectures, assignments and our semester project. I am currently in the advanced quantitative methods course and I am finding myself adequately prepared for it after having had Jerry as an instructor.

In short, I found Jerry's kindness, patience, dedication and statistics expertise to be the mark of a Distinguished Professor. He is certainly deserving of this award.

Sincerely,  
Sarah Luery

5250 Harmony Ave. # 111  
North Hollywood, CA 91601

February 25, 2012

Herman Debose, Chair  
Department of Sociology  
321 Santa Susana Hall  
Northridge, CA 9133-8318

Dear Dr. Debose:

Please accept this as my letter of support to consider Dr. Jerald Schutte as the awardee for the Distinguished Teaching Award. Having taken three courses with him, two undergraduate and one graduate, I can attest to how much of an outstanding instructor he has been.

As a student whose strengths are not in math or science, his instruction helped me develop skills in quantitative analysis, and become well prepared for my graduate courses. The research I began in his Advanced Statistics course has been built further in the Social Research course in the following term, and has contributed to a paper that I will be presenting at the Pacific Sociological Association Annual Meeting next month. Furthermore, this research is also serving as the quantitative portion of my thesis data.

Some of Jerry's many strengths as an instructor include his patience and understanding that repetition helps students struggling with statistics to gain mastery. Moreover, he designs courses so that we will learn how to apply the knowledge gained, in addition to mastering the course requirements. Also, understanding that working together will positively impact class performance, so he arranged for us to get beyond our shyness and form relationships.

Jerry is also a very dedicated, caring, and personable teacher. He always made himself available, and provided guidance and assistance outside of the classroom. In Fall 2009, when I took his combined undergraduate Statistics and Methods course, at least half of our class would attend his office hours, and basically hold another class session. Jerry accommodated us wanting to see us succeed, and being moved by our dedication to learn.

What is most outstanding about Jerry is his dedication to his students and family. In Fall 2009, his wife had a car wreck that left her in need of personalized care. Jerry managed to juggle his time to take care of his wife and his needy students as we approached our final exam. I just hope that he did not overtax himself trying to manage so much. Some of my classmates and I were so appreciative of all he had done for us that we gave him a small token of our appreciation at the end of the term.

I hope I have been able to convey how much of a strong candidate Dr. Jerald Schutte is for this Distinguished Teaching award. Please accept my letter of support for his consideration. I hope he wins!

Sincerely,  
Nayla Huq

March 5, 2012

Herman DeBose  
C/o Department of Sociology  
18111 Nordhoff Street  
Northridge, CA 91330  
Re: Letter of Support for Jerald Schutte

Dear Dr. DeBose,

I have been a student at Cal State Northridge for many years and have met few instructors like Dr. Jerald Schutte. While I was completing my bachelor's degree I enrolled in his social psychology, statistics, and research methods courses. Without a doubt, his classes have been some of the most challenging I've encountered. The material was always difficult and his expectations, rather high. However, I continued to enroll in his classes for two simple reasons- he is an extraordinary professor and a wonderful human being. He has an incredible ability to connect with all of his students. Dr. Schutte's dedication to his profession is evident in his teaching methods and the immense support he gives to his students, pushing all of us to reach our true potential. In speaking with my peers, it's become clear that many of us think highly of Dr. Schutte and feel extremely privileged to have been in his classes.

I am quite positive that you are familiar with his strong work ethic and talent, as a result, I won't spend much time touching on the quality of his instruction. I did, however, want to speak about the wonderful memories I have. In the fall of 2007, I enrolled in his combined statistics and research methods class held on Saturdays from roughly 8:00am to 3:00pm. I remember being completely nervous about this class. I was working full time and knew I had to perform extremely well. This was also the first semester in which I needed to reach out to CSUN's Center on Disabilities to request special equipment to accommodate my special needs in his classroom. I have a corneal disease which has left me with limited vision. As a previous student, I already knew that Dr. Schutte was extremely helpful and compassionate. It was important for me to find a professor who would be patient as dealing with the ramifications of my illness was difficult enough. Dr. Schutte provided the most comfortable environment he could, and for that I am eternally grateful. However, I must say that I am most grateful for his endless words of encouragement, both in undergraduate and graduate school. He pushed me to overcome adversity, continue my education, and pursue graduate school. I am now finally completing my master's degree and can say that he has played a pivotal role in my academic pursuits.

When I first found out that he was being nominated for the CSUN distinguished Teaching Award, I was ecstatic. I could not think of a professor who better deserves this recognition. I can only hope that he continues to teach at CSUN for years to come so he can continue to guide and mentor future students.

Sincerely,

*Esther Villegas-Sandoval*