Academic Affairs Excellence Awards

Application Form

Name: Brad Fowler

Rank: Lecturer

Department: Information Systems & Computer Science

Award applying for:
(Check one)

X	Excellence in Teaching Award*
	Excellence in Online Teaching Award*
	Excellence in Scholarship & Creative Endeavors Award*
	Excellence in University Service*
	Excellence in Scholarship of Teaching & Learning Award*
	Department/Program Excellence Award^
	Irene Rose Community Service Award^
	Laurie Hendrickson McMillian Faculty Award^

*college selection required before being forwarded to university

^university awards

College nominees' final applications received by Center for Teaching and Learning (ctl@gcsu.edu) by March 1.

Please insert the required documentation in the pages below for the award category you have noted above. Detailed information associated with each award is available online at the Center for Teaching and Learning website.

2023 Excellence in Teaching Award
Nomination Portfolio – Brad Fowler
Georgia College & State University

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**Department of Information Systems
and Computer Science**
J. Whitney Bunting College of Business
Campus Box 12
Milledgeville, GA 31061-0490
Phone 478-445-5721

February 20, 2023

Committee Members for the
Excellence in Teaching Award
Georgia College & State University
Milledgeville, GA 31061

Dear Committee Members:

Subject: Nomination of **Mr. Brad Fowler** for the Excellence in Teaching Award

I am writing this letter in support of Mr. Brad Fowler's application for the Excellence in Teaching Award. Brad Fowler has been a lecturer in the Department of Information Systems and Computer Science since fall 2016. In our respective leadership roles, Dean and Associate Dean, former department chair, and in an interim-capacity managing faculty in the Department of Information Systems and Computer Science, we have experienced first-hand how hard Brad works to create the best learning atmosphere possible for his students.

Mr. Fowler has exhibited exceptional teaching ability and extraordinary value to the institution. Brad is one of the best teachers we have ever had the pleasure of working with. He works diligently to improve his teaching and receives high marks from students. Mr. Fowler has consistently improved his teaching over the last five years. In spring 2022, his database (CBIS 3214) response rates were 85.29% and 96.67%, and the students rated him a 4.93 and 4.76 respectively. Having taught database for years, it is not an easy class to teach and is often the "weeder" course for many MIS students. Despite this, students wrote comments such as "He helps every student when in need of help and he does a good job of explaining how to do things in a complicated class," "Dr. Fowler makes every single class engaging and teaches in a way that really aids students in learning a subject that before, we did not know a single thing about" and "Professor Fowler, makes a gargantuan effort to involve all the students in each and every lesson. He does an amazing job at making the material simple to understand and takes a lot of time to explain concepts that the class had a hard time understanding the first go around." Another student stated that, "Dr. Fowler is an incredible teacher. He has a lot of patience, and he is very well spoken. It is clear that he respects each of his students, as we respect him back. I would recommend this class to any of my peers, regardless of their major. Dr. Fowler has gone out of his way multiple times to ensure my success as a student, and I am very grateful to have had him as my teacher."

Over the past two years (2021 and 2022), Brad's score on the effective teacher rating for the three or four classes he had evaluated each semester has ranged from 4.7 to 5.0, with four perfect fives! During this time, Brad taught three different preps every semester except one (when he taught four different preps). This also includes spring 2021 when he

was still teaching hybrid classes with students both face-to-face and online at the same time.

Brad writes a personal teaching reflection each year as part of his annual faculty performance review. In 2019, this reflection indicated he had worked to reduce textbook costs for students by removing textbooks when possible and providing current, alternative resources for students. He continues to do this, especially because of the requirement to continually update to stay current in the information systems field. In addition, Brad "flipped" all his courses to require the students to review material before class. While some explanation of material is required (typical lecture), he worked to make all his classroom activities engaging. Mr. Fowler has also continued to improve his student assessments by requiring short answers, so he can see how well his students have internalized what they have learned in the classroom. In 2020, his reflection indicated his work with CTL on Quality Matters to assure that the hybrid classes he taught during the pandemic were focused on both in class as well as online students. In 2021, he focused on making his classrooms more collaborative while still reducing independence on textbooks. His 2022 reflection indicated Brad started giving students a note prompt (basically an outline with room for them to take notes) to encourage his students to be engaged during every class. He also focused on context to do a better job of relating the topics discussed in class to past and future topics. Overall, these reflections show a deep commitment to improving his teaching and more importantly, improving the students' learning.

In addition to Brad's work to improve his classes as well as his students' comments indicating not only that they appreciate how much they learn in his class but also the fact he cares and respects them as individuals, Brad started work on his Ph.D. in fall 2020, and he successfully completed his comprehensive exams in December 2020. While many may not see the relationship of this to an Excellence in Teaching award, Brad has directly taken both the new content he has learned as well as the student experiences he has had (good and bad) and applied them to his classes to continue to improve his teaching. In conclusion, we cannot imagine the award going to anyone else as Brad personifies what it means to be an excellent teacher!

Sincerely,

Micheal T. Stratton, Ph.D.
Dean and Professor of Management
J. Whitney Bunting College of Business and Technology

Tanya Goette

Tanya Goette, Ph. D.
Associate Dean and Professor of Management Information Systems
J. Whitney Bunting College of Business and Technology

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**GEORGIA
COLLEGE**

GEORGIA'S PUBLIC LIBERAL ARTS UNIVERSITY

Tuesday, 21 February 2023

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing to give my strongest recommendation to Brad Fowler for Georgia College & State University's Excellence in Teaching award. Although only in my second year as Brad's colleague, I have spent many years in higher education. Brad represents the best of us.

In his classes, which I have observed firsthand, Brad uses real-world scenarios to make abstract concepts engaging and accessible. For instance, he connects a sophisticated process, like creating a data base, to everyday experiences his students already understand. Patient and attentive, Brad encourages the students to work through the complex material. Whether they struggle or achieve, the class becomes their laboratory. They take ownership of the coursework. This ownership, this maturation, the holy grail for educators, happens because Brad's exemplary teaching allows his students shine. His students respect him and appreciate the preparation he provides them.

Brad is committed to our students. He never stops working to be a better teacher. He and I talk often. He talks about teaching strategies, about ways to connect our students to real-world experiences, and about ways to include our students in our research. I do not believe it's an overstatement to say that Brad teaches his colleagues, too. He approaches everything he does with dedication, kindness, expertise, empathy, and rigor.

No one is more deserving of this award than Brad, and it is my pleasure to write on his behalf. I give Brad Fowler might highest recommendation.

Sincerely,

Ward Risvold

Ward Risvold, Ph.D.
Lecture of Business Communications
Department of Information Systems / Computer Science
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GEORGIA COLLEGE
& STATE UNIVERSITY

2/23/2023

Dear Award Committee,

I am pleased to recommend Professor Brad Fowler for the Excellence in Teaching award based on his outstanding performance in the classroom. As his colleague, I have been impressed with Brad's teaching abilities, and I believe he embodies what it means to be an exceptional teacher.

Although Brad undoubtedly has tangible evidence of his teaching excellence, I want to highlight the intangible qualities that make him exceptional. I have had the pleasure of working alongside Brad since 2013, when he first enrolled in our master's program in MIS, transitioning from a music background. Despite being a non-traditional student with a family and full-time job, he excelled in our program, demonstrating the qualities he now embodies in his everyday teaching.

Brad empathizes with his students, particularly when teaching complex computing theories. He breaks down difficult concepts into manageable pieces and emphasizes what his students will "really need" to succeed in his class. As his office neighbor, I have witnessed how he builds rapport with students, who seek his advice on both coursework and life matters.

What sets Brad apart is his excitement in discovering new methods to teach principles and provide students with feedback. He sets a high standard for his classes, which inspires me and others to become better teachers. Overall, I believe Brad is a deserving candidate for the Excellence in Teaching award and I recommend him wholeheartedly.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Bryan A. Marshall

Bryan Marshall, Ph.D.
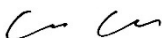Professor of Information Systems

February 14, 2023

Letter of Recommendation for Brad Fowler
Excellence in Teaching Award

Brad Fowler has been my colleague since 2016. Over the years, we have discussed teaching and pedagogy on several occasions. I have never been in one of Brad's classes, but those conversations have helped me understand how he teaches and interacts with students. Brad wants his students to engage with the material, understand how their learning matters in the real world, and prove they have accumulated the necessary skills to use what he has taught them. Over the years, he has continuously refined his approach to teaching in a way meant to help his students meet those goals by focusing on classroom engagement and what he calls teaching through relevant context. His student feedback, and the informal comments I receive from his students, suggest students enjoy his approach and feel they are learning to use the tools they need to be successful.

In addition to being an excellent teacher, Brad has presented research focused on helping other professors in his field improve their own experience in the classroom. His research is focused on rapidly growing fields in education. For example, he has presented work on FinTech, which is an increasingly important element of both financial literacy and the financial field, broadly. He also recently spoke to our faculty about security in online classes. Given the rise of online education and testing, AI-assisted cheating, and the demand for solutions to cheating concerns, his decision to share his experience with the faculty was well timed and much appreciated.

Brad's approach to teaching is evolving as quickly as his field of study. As he has worked to improve as a teacher, he has also shared what he has learned through a series of pedagogical presentations intended to help others in his field improve with him. That willingness to share what he has learned is the essence of Teaching Excellence.

Sincerely,

Christopher Clark
Professor of Economics

S. Bradley Fowler

Georgia College & State University • J. Whitney Bunting College of Business & Technology
Department of IS&CS • CBX 012 • Milledgeville, GA 31061
brad.fowler@gcsu.edu • 478-445-8521 (office) • 404-644-4744 (cell)

Abbreviated Curriculum Vitae – March 2023

Education

Ph.D in Information Systems – Dakota State University, (Expected Graduation Spring 2024)
Master of Management Information Systems - Georgia College & State University, 2015
GPA – 4.0 (Summa Cum Laude)
B.M. in Music Performance – Jazz Studies - University of Alabama, 2002

Academic Positions

Lecturer of Management Information Systems, Georgia College & State University, (August 2016 – Present)
Adjunct Instructor, Georgia College & State University, (August 2015 – July 2016)

Teaching

Courses Taught - Principles of Information Systems, Advanced Networking, Introduction to Information Technology, Introduction to Database Management, Electronic Commerce, Web Design Tools, Business Publishing, Computer Security, System Administration, Information Technology: Hardware and Software, First Year Academic Seminar, Introduction to Computer Science & Applications

Research

Fowler, B., Cardon, P., Marshall, B., Elder, K. L. (2021). What do conference attendees want from academic presentations? A study of an information systems professional organization. *Issues in Information Systems, 22*(3), 107-119.

Kobbe, E. S., Leader, L., Hsiao, E.-L., Cardon, P. W., Marshall, B., Callender, C., Gibson, N., Fowler, S. B., Godin, J. J. (2020). Engaging Students with Course Content Using Scheduled and Unscheduled Emails and Text Messages. *Issues in Information Systems, 21*(1), 177-184.

Fowler, B, Godin, J, and Geddy, M. "Using NoSQL to Introduce Big Data Collection in a Traditional Database Course" Journal of Information Systems Education. 2016

Conference Presentations

"The State of FinTech in Academia: An AACSB Survey," EDSIGCON. Clearwater, FL; November 2022.

"Standardizing Surrogate Keys for Introductory Database Courses: A Teaching Case," Southern Association for Information Systems, Myrtle Beach, SC; March 2022.

"What do Conference Attendees Want from Academic Presentations," International Association of Computer Information Systems, Virtual; October 2021.

"Do Students Learn Rapidly Developing Fields Better Without Textbooks?," International Association of Computer Information Systems. Clearwater, FL; October 2019.

"Using Amazon Web Services to Teach System Administration," International Association of Computer Information Systems. Clearwater, FL; October 2018.

"Integrating NoSQL in the Classroom," Southeastern Association of Information Systems. Hilton Head Island, SC; March 2015.

"Collecting Big Data: A NoSQL Teaching Case," International Information Management Association. Chattanooga, TN; October 2015.

Academic Service

University

University Senate - Resources, Planning, and Institutional Policy Committee, Vice-Chair (2021 – Present), Secretary (2020 – 2021), Member (2019 – 2020)
Infrastructure and Security Advisory Committee, Member (2021 – Present)
Academic Technology Advisory Committee, Member (2018 - 2019, 2022 – Present)
Mandatory Fee Committee, Member (2020)

Department

ISCS Chair Search Committee, Member (2022)
Coordinator for Principles of Information Systems (2016 – Present)
Manager of PearsonVue Testing Center (2016 – 2020)

Mentorship Activities

Faculty Advisor, AIS Club (2020 – Present)

Honors and Awards

Center for Teaching and Learning: Thank-a-Teacher 2021 & 2022
Most Outstanding Graduate Student for Masters of Management Information Systems
Honor Societies: Beta Gamma Sigma, Phi Kappa Phi, Upsilon Pi Epsilon

Professional Development

Graduate Program – PhD in Information Systems, Dakota State University (2020 – Present)
Community-of-Practice - Reimaging Higher Education, Cynthia Alby (Spring 2023)
Continuing Education Program – Design for Transformative Learning, Center for Teaching and Learning, Cynthia Alby (Twice – Spring 2019, Summer 2019)
Workshop – Meeting Accessibility Standards in Online Courses, Center for Teaching and Learning, Janet Sylvia (November 2017)
Workshop – Impact of Microaggressions and Implicit Bias on Student Learning, Office of Inclusive Excellence, Veronica Womack (November 2017)
Workshop – Quality Matters Rubric Training, Center for Teaching and Learning, Jeannie Sewell (January 2017)

Reflective Statement – Philosophy of Teaching

What is the purpose of teaching? Why do I walk into that classroom each day? The answer to the latter question is now and will always be the students. I'm here for them. At some point, they are going to need or want to provide for their own survival. They may not be doing that for themselves at the time of my instruction, but they will eventually. They will need a house to protect them from the cold and food to keep them nourished. They will need a car to get them from here to there. Once those needs are met, they may want to travel, or start a family. If they start a family, they will need to provide for someone else's means of survival. They may one day like to retire and enjoy the latter days of their lives. For most of them, that means that they will need to trade their knowledge, skills, experience, and energy for the resources to attain these things. That is where the first question comes in. What is the purpose of teaching? We teach so that they may be enlightened and that enlightenment becomes the foundation for their success. As teachers, we guide students through opportunities to gain the knowledge, skills, and experiences that can allow them to attain the things that they need in life and chase the dreams that they choose to chase. We can't learn for them, so we must do our best to create environments that inspire them to succeed. Environments that engage them with the content that inspires them to create knowledge, skills, and experience.

I like to know the fundamental nature of things. When I learn something new, I always want to know the fundamental 'why' of the subject. When I teach a subject, I always try to pair the subject content with some fundamental understanding of the subject. In my Principles of Information Systems course, the subject matter generally covers computers and computers systems that are used by businesses. The students study topics like computer hardware, databases, networks, cloud services, and enterprise systems over the course of the semester. Before we begin covering these topics, we cover the fundamental nature of business. I believe this is critical to learning the subsequent Information Systems topics. The reason that it is critical is because without understanding the fundamental nature of business, the students can't possibly understand why these technologies exist. They can learn that a database is a computer system that allows users to logically store data and that is fine. But if they understand how databases support the success of a business, then they have a fuller and more comprehensive understanding of the database technology. The connections created in the classroom between the abstract information systems content and the real-life business context allow the information to be more meaningful and, ultimately, the students better understand the purpose for studying it.

By introducing the students to the process of striving to understand the 'whys' of the subject that we are covering, I hope that they are learning how to find the 'whys' in everything they learn. This is one of the hallmarks of a liberal arts education. Understanding 'why' shows a deeper understanding of a subject matter and leads to the ability to think creatively, find solutions to problems, and see the world in new ways. Students that learn to ask 'why' become life-long learners.

My undergraduate degree is in Jazz Studies. For many years, I have played music. Playing jazz music is predicated on group exploration. How a jazz group plays a song during any given performance depends on what each member of the group plays in every moment of the song. Jazz musicians are taught to listen as they play and react to what others are playing. Part of the enjoyment of playing jazz music is the thrill of the unknown and the ability to take the music to unexpected places. I like to bring that mindset into the classroom. I love the thrill of not knowing exactly how a class will go. I take a lesson plan into every class, but the lesson plan only tells me where we need to go. It does not tell me how we should get there. How we get there depends on everyone in the classroom. In the classroom, I teach and I listen. Listening allows me to react to how the students receive the content. The goal is not for the students to hear the lecture, it is to communicate the content. Like a great jazz performance, if everyone in the classroom is listening and communicating, then there is an opportunity for organic, unplanned learning experiences that transcend a lesson plan.

In 2019, I studied Design for Transformative Learning with Cynthia Alby. This class took a holistic approach to course design that fosters dynamic and engaging pedagogies and teaching techniques. I enjoyed the content so much that I took the course twice. From this course, I discovered concepts like backward course design and formative assessments. Backward design has helped me to give each course a solid foundation from the very beginning and formative assessments allow me adjust to the ebb and flow of the students understanding as we move through the content. These techniques are the foundation that allow for the classroom improvisation. I think the most impactful thing that I learned in Cynthia's courses was the importance of feedback. She shared with us research that established empirical evidence of the impact of feedback on learning. Further, we discussed what types of feedback are most impactful. Recently, in my PhD studies, I studied with a professor that gave no feedback for any assessment. I got to experience firsthand how impossible it is to improve your knowledge or skills without feedback. I have made feedback an essential aspect of my teaching. I make sure that every student gets feedback on every assignment, project, and exam. Through feedback, students that are struggling with a concept or assignment have the opportunity to see and understand their mistakes or gaps in their knowledge. Even excelling students receive praise so that they know that their efforts have resulted in more than just a score.

Since getting an undergraduate degree in music, I have worked many jobs in several industries. Teaching is by far the most challenging job that I have ever had. It is a challenge that I love. The target is always moving. Adjustments must always be made. There is no "set it and forget it" in teaching. We show up to the classroom and seek to find that place in learning where light bulbs go off and new concepts finally make sense. The students figure out a skill that has eluded them. What got us to that place today, won't necessarily get us there tomorrow. But if we have a solid foundation in our lesson plan and the confidence to explore then we will find the groove and make the connections that lead us back to more light bulb moments.

Innovative Teaching Practices

1. No More Textbooks

Over the last four years, I have moved away from using textbooks in my courses. In the field of Information Systems, published texts are not typically used by professionals to learn about new concepts and technologies. New technologies in my field develop incredibly fast. Therefore, professional need access to information about these technologies long before it is available in printed texts. Blockchain technology is a great example of a fast-emerging technical area. Blockchain is a secure, decentralized ledger system. Many companies are investing significant resources into developing and implementing it for use in their products and operations. Industry professionals who are trying to gain knowledge about this technology will not find information about blockchain in printed texts. Instead, they will use search engines and other internet-based resources to find information about blockchain technology. The same approach has been used for new concepts like the Cloud, NoSQL databases, and many other emerging technology concepts over the last fifteen years.

I believe that the ability to find accurate information through internet resources is a critically important skill to have as a professional in the field of Information Systems. Students need to be able to find resources on the internet and then discern whether or not the information that they have found is accurate, timely, and relevant. All of the content that is typically in the standard Information Systems and Information Technology textbooks also exists on the internet. This gives students the opportunity to develop important research and information literacy skills. A bonus to this approach is that the students do not incur the cost of a textbook.

In my Principles of Information Systems course, students are given a research organizer. The research organizer is an Excel document that contains individual tabs for each chapter covered in the course. Each chapter tab contains a table that organizes each topic covered in the chapter. Students are asked to research each topic using any resources they find on the Internet. They are then instructed to describe each topic in their own words and cite their sources. They are also instructed to write two hypothetical quiz questions for each topic. Writing quiz questions allows them to synthesize the information into more than just a definition in order to strengthen their understanding of the topic.

Research organizers are turned in before we start the corresponding chapter. This follows the principles of the flipped classroom approach. I want them to begin to develop a basic understanding of chapter content before we cover it in class. I provide a guided notes document in class for each chapter that they can use to make handwritten notes as we cover each topic in class. I believe that the combination of the research organizer and the guided notes provides the students with a deeper understanding of the course content than through the use of a textbook.

2. Database Content Simplification

One of the main content areas of an Introduction to Database course is database design. This area covers the concepts and techniques used to create databases that are free of data anomalies. Many of the tools used to accomplish this center around a set of rules and constraints. These rules were established in the early 1970's when data storage was very expensive and database designers were encouraged to design databases that did not waste storage space. Several of the rules reflect this concept. Data storage is not an issue today. Data storage is incredibly abundant and very cheap.

Google and Microsoft practically give it away through their cloud storage products. After consulting with colleagues in academia and database professionals, I concluded that some of the rules are antiquated. When the students study database design in my course, they learn a simpler and more efficient process for designing database. This allows them to focus on the most important rules. I have found that they are able to create functionally sound databases more effectively earlier in the course than when they studied the traditional set of database design rules. I have presented this topic at an academic conference and am currently building a teaching case for publication.

3. Student Assessment through GaView

I administer almost all of my exams face-to-face through GaView. I have found that I can grade exams faster and, more importantly, give higher quality feedback when I use GaView. Most of the questions on my exams require a written response. I believe that written response questions promote critical thinking by allowing students to use their own words to demonstrate their understanding of a concept. I also believe that written response questions allow me to more accurately assess each student's understanding of the concepts. The downside to grading written response questions is that it takes a long time to grade each question. This can have several adverse effects. It can take a long time to get the graded exams back to the students. It can make it harder to give rich feedback. it can also introduce uneven grading through grading fatigue and spanning grading across several days. When setting up an exam in GaView, I can prewrite a basic level of feedback for each question. When students see the feedback for the exam, they will be able to compare their answers with what I believe to be solid answers to each question. If their answer was a little off the mark then they can get a sense of why it was off the mark and by how much. I can then focus my energy on providing deeper feedback for more problematic answers. I believe that effective feedback is critical to student learning. I try to provide the richest feedback that I can so the students can understand not just what they got incorrect in an assessment, but also why it was incorrect. Some of the most powerful learning opportunities come from correcting mistakes. Using GaView for testing allows me to get grades back to students faster and with more impactful feedback. I recently presented this topic to my peers in the College of Business and Technology so they may benefit from it as well.

Letter of Support from a Former Student

During my undergraduate studies at Georgia College & State University, I had the pleasure of taking two courses from Professor Brad Fowler. I first met Prof. Fowler during the Spring semester of 2017 when I took his Principles of Information Systems class. During this class, I naturally felt engaged and excited to come to Atkinson Hall because of the enthusiasm and passion Prof. Fowler puts into his teaching. This was just the start of my relationship with Prof. Fowler and begins to explain why I believe he is deserving of the Georgia College (GC) Excellence in Teaching Award.

I also took Prof. Fowler's Introduction to Information Technology course during the Fall semester of 2018. As a student, I always felt prepared for class and that I had a way to succeed in his courses. Prof. Fowler always provided test preparation material, so that his students can feel confident to do their best on his exams. This was a benefit for me, as I sometimes lacked confidence when it came to test taking during my undergraduate career. Prof. Fowler also understands how to adapt course material so that students are engaged and excited to learn. For example, the Principles of Information Systems course was taught to all Business Majors at GC during my time there as a student. After taking this course from Prof. Fowler, I knew for certain that I picked the right major in Management Information Systems (MIS). I specifically remember other classmates who were inspired to Major in MIS or explore opportunities in MIS specifically because of what they learned from Prof. Fowler.

I enjoyed my time interacting with Prof. Fowler both within and outside of class. Prof. Fowler would always be available during his listed office hours, and even outside of regular hours, he'd be open to meeting students in need. What makes Prof. Fowler stand out though is that he is a professor who may run in to one of his students in the hallway and check-in to see how his student is doing carrying on a conversation. I remember trying to get somewhere on campus, then I found myself in a five-minute unplanned hallway chat with Prof. Fowler. This demonstrated to me that he does not just care about whether his students are learning what he teaches, but the well-being of the student experience overall.

Since graduating in December 2020, I have kept in touch with Prof. Fowler. I went through a graduate school program at another university, and Prof. Fowler was willing to meet with me on Zoom to talk about graduate school applications and preparation before my program. He also remained available to hear about my graduate school experience throughout, always providing helpful advice.

From my time in his principles class, to a graduate school grad, I know for certain that Prof. Fowler is someone who cares, guides, and wants the best out of all his students. With everything already stated, I highly recommend Professor Brad Fowler for the GC Excellence in Teaching Award.

Sincerely,

Connor King

Letter of Support from a Former Student

Over the course of my time as a student at Georgia College, I got to know Professor Brad Fowler very well as a student in a few of his classes. I first met him my sophomore year of college when I took his Intro to IT class. I also took his Intro to Database class later in my junior year as well. In addition to the two classes that I had him as a professor for, I had countless interactions with him outside the classroom including unlimited visits to his office hours and time together at AIS club meetings and events. For additional credibility of this letter, I want to mention that I had the honor of being a former valedictorian of Georgia College, inductee into the Phi Kappa Phi Honor Society, and recipient of the MIS Student of the Year Award. With my prominent level of academic performance and 3 years of time spent around Professor Fowler from my sophomore year until graduation, I can confidently say that I know what excellence looks like in a professor, and Professor Fowler is highly deserving of the Georgia College Excellence in Teaching Award.

First, I want to talk about Professor Fowler's teaching style. Throughout my academic career, I had many professors who practiced the traditional PowerPoint lecture style of teaching with minimal to zero student engagement. There is nothing wrong with this style of teaching, but there are better ways to do it. Professor Fowler was not one of these professors. His teaching style was highly focused on student engagement. Every single one of his class sessions always revolved around student engagement to a high extent. He treated everybody equally and always looked forward to students speaking up and answering his questions when he would ask them to the class. Sometimes, when he would ask a question to the class, he would sit there and wait in silence for up to 2 to 3 minutes until a student would finally speak up and provide an answer. I loved this, and let me add, there was no such thing as a bad answer in his classes either. Professor Fowler's use of this teaching style gave me the confidence to start speaking up and answering questions in front of the whole class, and it made me a better and faster learner by getting to assess my knowledge daily during each class session by getting instant feedback from Professor Fowler after answering questions in class. These are all skills that I acquired and use daily in my corporate job, and I am sure that many other students acquired these same skills from Professor Fowler's classes.

Another awesome trait of Professor Fowler was his availability outside of class time. Of course, he had his normal office hours like any other professor as they are required to have those, but his availability always went way beyond that. You could find him in his office just about every day of the week for most of the day. If he was not teaching a class, then you could always find him in his office. Whether I was enrolled in one of his classes during a semester or not, I would always visit his office multiple times a week just to say hello or even sometimes get advice on an assignment even if it was not for one of his classes, and he would always help me. He was just that good. If you were unable to visit him in person in his office to get assistance, then he was always available through all other means of communication too such as phone call, text, email, or video chat. He would make your best option for communication his best option as well.

The last and most valuable traits of Professor Fowler that make him highly deserving of the Georgia College Excellence in Teaching Award are his attitude and effort. In my final 3 years as a student at Georgia College, I spent more time around Professor Fowler than any other student. As I mentioned earlier, I had unlimited visits to his office hours. The one thing that amazed me

the most about him was that I never caught him on a bad day. Every time I saw him and talked to him during one of his classes, while passing by each other in the hallway, or in his office, he always had a smile on his face. Also, no matter what he was working on, he would always set it to the side and help me and other students first and then continue with his work after he was finished helping us no matter how long it took. He never once said to me that he was busy and now was not a good time. He kept this same energy every time he stepped foot on the Georgia College campus. Lastly, to add to his effort, he always graded assignments on time and met all his deadlines as a professor on time. He did all of this while currently working toward completing a doctoral degree and raising two young children. It takes a special kind of individual to manage this kind of workload both as a professor and in personal life.

Overall, Professor Brad Fowler is more than just a one-and-done professor that you do not talk to ever again after you take one of his classes. He is a leader with a passion for impacting his student's lives and careers in positive ways. He has already accomplished wonderful things at Georgia College, but he is not done yet. He will continue to thrive in his work at Georgia College creating positive impacts for those around him for many years to come. With that being said, I hope Professor Brad Fowler gets the recognition he deserves by receiving the Georgia College Excellence in Teaching Award.

Sincerely,

Branson Boswell

<center>Current Student – Richa Moses</center>

It is pleasure to be writing this recommendation for Professor Brad Fowler. I strongly recommend Prof. Fowler for the Teaching Excellence Award. If there is anyone in Georgia College, Par Excellence in Teaching, especially when it comes to computers, it is hands down Professor Fowler. I have had the privilege of having him as my Teacher in two courses: Introduction to Database (CBIS 3214) & Advanced Networking (CBIS 4218). I must admit, I have never come across such a versatile teacher as Him. He is very diligent, hardworking committed, and truly strives for the success of all his students. All His courses are highly organized and perfectly modelled to provide students with complete knowledge of the subject.

Not having much computer background, I was concerned about striving in such technical courses, but having Prof. Fowler as my teacher truly helped me ace these classes. His lectures are so designed that even a non-technical student would understand the concepts and become interested in computers. He does an excellent work laying core foundations of every topic while giving real world examples before proceeding to the advanced level. Moreover, He makes learning and computers so much interesting. Our classroom environment is always full of excitement and celebration while doing labs or practical. The best part is Prof. Fowler celebrating with us over our smallest success. His deeply ingrained teachings are meant to be life-long.

More than anything, the dedication and willingness Prof. Fowler has for helping his students is absolutely commendable. He goes above and beyond to assist his students at any given point. In my experience, there are countless instances I could proudly and gratefully advocate of. Last semester (Fall 2022) with my father's health being severely down, I had a rough start entering the semester. Prof. Fowler was extremely understanding, patient and helpful in making sure I strived in my academics. He made himself available all the time I had doubt, questions or

needed his help to prepare for exams. Even if they were the simplest doubts, he always received my questions with much importance. Which I think is the greatest quality a student wants in their Teacher.

To say all this, is still an understatement. Prof. Fowler is a true Gem and absolutely deserving of the Teaching Excellence Award.

Current Student – Walker Jeffers

I am honored that Mr. Brad Fowler has asked me to write a recommendation letter. I have had the privilege of taking three classes with him: Introduction to Information systems, Database management, and Advanced Networking. I feel that the two most important qualities of a successful teacher are the ability to engage the students and the ability to make the subject matter interesting. Mr. Fowler excels at both. He has a knack for taking complex concepts and breaking them down into basic, understandable parts. He also encourages class participation and allows us to ask questions. His enthusiasm for the subject matter is contagious, and I believe it has been a major contributing factor to my success here at GCSU.

More than just a great teacher, Mr. Fowler is also an inspiring mentor. He has gone above and beyond to help me with my own personal goals and aspirations. He has provided me with invaluable advice and support and has even helped me secure an internship with the IT department here at GCSU. I am confident that I would not be where I am today without his guidance and encouragement.

In conclusion, I am confident that Mr. Fowler would be an excellent addition to this award's history. His knowledge, enthusiasm, and dedication to teaching are unmatched. He has motivated me to pursue interesting projects and to think outside of the box to solve complex problems. I am certain that Mr. Fowler's talents and expertise are an asset to GCSU, and I highly recommend him for this award.

Current Student – Jonas McClelland

I have had the privilege of being a student in two of Mr. Fowler's classes, and they have been great. Mr. Fowler is very deserving of the Excellence in Teaching Award. He is undoubtedly very knowledgeable in his content area, but in addition to that, he can relate important information to the students with ease. He is also a welcoming individual who is willing to listen and guide students through whatever issues they have.

I kind of stumbled into my first Management of Info Systems class (taught by Mr. Fowler) because I did not know what other class to take at the time. Mr. Fowler's lectures opened a whole new world of information that was interesting to me. He presents everything in such a chill and funny way, but also reminds the students of its importance. He is excellent at conveying the ideas of computers, business, and databases to people who do not have much of a background in technology. He clearly has a passion for the things he is teaching, and he has a drive to ensure that students understand the material. His mixture of care, intellect, and passion is a rare combination. I cannot think of a person more deserving of this award than Mr. Fowler.

Supporting Documents

Introduction

In my Reflective Statement, I asked two questions. What is the purpose of teaching and why do I walk into the classroom? I believe the answer to those questions is to inspire the students to gain the knowledge, skills, and experience that is going to give them the foundation to provide for themselves the life that they want to live. It is an important goal and it inspires me to be the best teacher that I can be. The following documentation serves two purposes. My attendance policy provides the students with an incentive to be in the classroom when it is time to learn. I think it is very important for the students to be in class. Student evaluations allow me to better understand what students believe that I am doing right and what they feel could be better. I always want to be in tune with how my teaching is affecting the students learning. Student evaluations are a powerful tool for better understanding this affect. I read them carefully.

Selected Components of Course Syllabi

Attendance Policy

Class attendance is extremely important to succeed in this course. ***I expect everyone to be in attendance for every class.*** I take role for every class time. I do this for two reasons. It helps me to learn your name and who you are. It also gives me some data to help me to understand the class. In other words, if you are not doing good in the course and you have poor attendance I don't have to work too hard to understand why.

<u>Here is my attendance policy</u>:
Perfect attendance will be rewarded with 2 full points added to your final grade. Example: You have an 88.5 at the end of the semester. Your final grade will be a 90.5. I will allow two absences to not count against your attendance as long as you make a considerable effort to prove that they merited missing a class. This means you need to come to my virtual office hours and explain your absence. No excuses will be accepted after the class time. After two absences, you will be ineligible to receive the 2 points.

Since implementing this policy in Spring of 2017, over 100 students have earned a grade increase from this attendance reward

SRIS Student Evaluation Ratings – 2016-2022

Table 1. SRIS "Excellent Teacher" Ratings

Semester	Course	Rating	Semester	Course	Rating
Fall 2016	Principles of Information Systems	4.6	Spring 2021	Introduction to IT	4.76
Fall 2017	Principles of Information Systems	4.8		Advanced Networking	5
	Web Design Tools	4.8		Introduction to Database Management	4.89
Spring 2017	Principles of Information Systems	4.9		Introduction to Database Management	4.72
	Web Design Tools	4.5	Fall 2021	Principles of Information Systems	4.57
Fall 2018	Principles of Information Systems	4.4		Introduction to Database Management	4.8
	Web Design Tools	4.7		Business Publishing	4.8

Spring 2018*				Advanced Networking	4.87
Fall 2019	Web Design Tools	4.92		First-Year Academic Seminar	4.67
	Principles of Information Systems	4.67	Spring 2022	Introduction to Database Management	4.93
Spring 2020	Principles of Information Systems	4.88		Introduction to Database Management	4.76
	Introduction to IT	3.9		Introduction to IT	4.62
Fall 2020	Introduction to IT	4.5	Fall 2022	Principles of Information Systems	4.81
	Introduction to IT	5		Principles of Information Systems	4.38
	Business Publishing	4.75		Advanced Networking	4.9
	Principles of Information Systems	4.56		Introduction to Database Management	4.47

Average Rating - Fall 2016-Fall 2022: 4.70

*Spring 2018 evaluations were lost for the whole ISCS department

Recent Student Evaluation Comments

Principles of Information Systems

"Professor Fowler is undoubtedly the reason I took such a large interest and effort in this course. He cared about his students and their success, but also made sure you truly worked for your grade. He tied every single topic and term together to a main idea throughout the entire 16 weeks. Professor Fowler was interactive in his teaching in a way that really drew the students in and made us want to learn the information. I would not have enjoyed and succeeded in this class as much as I did without Professor Fowler."

"This course was one of my favorite. I don't really enjoy the information that we were learning, but the way that Professor Fowler presented the information to us made it enjoyable and easy for me to learn. He explained pretty difficult concepts in easy to understand terms so that everyone could understand. He was always willing to talk about anything related to the concepts at hand in order for us to gain a deeper understanding. He was a great professor and made me look forward to coming to class everyday."

"Mr. Fowler is an amazing teacher. He genuinely cares about each student in the class and hopes they succeed. I have Mr. Fowler for 2 classes and he knows every ones name in the class by heart. I have never had a teacher in college that knows every ones name."

"Greater teacher has helped me get a better understanding of how the whole subject works and how it revolves more into the business world. He teaches exactly the information he wants you to know for the exam and quizzes. All class work has a reason to help you have a better understanding of the information."

"I really enjoyed the interactive format of the material. It was so much more beneficial to me than cramming from just a single textbook."

"Professor Fowler has been such helpful to his students. I really enjoy the contents and the way he teachs; He has simplified most of the concepts so that it is more comprehensive for students"

"What an amazing teacher. I had a great semester in this class because of how well it was planned out and executed. Sometimes I wish I showed up to all his lectures because he interested me as a person and his content was well taught, but I'd rather be home in the pandemic."

"Fowler was a great professor, he really took the time to help us understand and always made himself feel as approachable as possible, it really made a difference knowing he wanted me to succeed and appreciated the extra effort I put in."

Web Design Tools

"Mr. Fowler is great! I can't say enough nice things about him. I had to take this class for my Mass Comm major and was a little intimated considering most of the people in the class were business or computer science majors. Mr. Fowler structures his class very well and is nice and approachable and made it a point to learn each of our names which was very nice and he didn't have to do at all. I felt like I learned a lot about the subject this semester and feel more confident in the subject. I would 100% take any other class with Mr. Fowler"

Introduction to Information Technology

"I really liked this course and the way that Professor Fowler taught it. He was also very flexible during this COVID period and worked with us as students to get the best out of the course. I also had some technical difficulties throughout the semester and he was very understanding of this and really worked with me as a student which was super appreciated because not all professors do. I highly recommend Professor Fowler for this course!"

"I have two courses with Dr. Fowler and they are both structured in a similar manner. Thus, I've duplicated my feedback from my previous survey submission. Dr. Fowler is very organized and has a comprehensive course structure in place which is always updated to reflect real-time progress. I've noticed that each professor has been given discretion on how best to adapt their courses to the ongoing COVID crisis. I believe Dr. Fowler's facilitation of instruction via a hybrid environment was beneficial. Unfortunately, I've been suffering from serious health issues this past year. Even under the care of nationally renowned neurologists and neurosurgeons in the United States, my condition has continued to deteriorate and is not responsive to any form of treatment. I was faced with a difficult decision this semester. I could either continue academic enrollment and push through the bad days or withdrawal the entirety of my course load to explore alternative treatment options. Fortunately, Dr. Fowler allowed me to virtually attend his classes and was extremely accommodating concerning my present situation. Thankfully, because of this, I was able to continue my academics. I'm extremely grateful that Dr. Fowler was willing to work with me this semester. His lectures are coherent, well-planned, and very intuitive. The assignments and projects for this course complement the lecture material very well. The assigned exercises are not "busy work" and reinforce the material taught during class meeting times. Fowler's flexible office hours made communication convenient and efficient."

"Taking this course with Professor Fowler has been great. He is extremely helpful and offers us with the best materials/lectures in order to gain a full understanding of what we are learning about. I would definitely recommend him and this course to anyone considering it!"

"Mr. Fowler exemplifies what it means to be a professor of higher education, but a teacher of others. He is great at explaining his reasoning and knowledge for others to learn from. Mr. Fowler provides a

range of different resources and background information for those who's interest align with the course material. He continues to strive in tailoring his classroom experience and material to better allow creativity and learning, while still getting strong grasps of the material being presented. Most of all though, Mr. Fowler continues to push his students (myself especially) to be their best and seek out new knowledge and find what drives us forward as far as interests. I would say he is the best of his department in this regard, but potentially the entire college based on my experience with professors. I hope that he has ever opportunity to grow and continue his brilliant work so long as he wishes and I thank him for all his efforts in developing my education and me as a person and professional."

Introduction to Database

"Mr. Fowler is an amazing professor. He is one of the few that I have met at GCSU that truly cares about his students and their futures. Even during the Covid pandemic, he did not make any excuses and was able to hold his class in person at least once a week. That is huge for me because there is just no way that this class can be taugh fully online. I feel that it would have a negative impact on my knowledge of the industry after graduation. Additionally, Mr. Fowler is always available during office hours and beyond. He will literally help you with any assignment you need. He is quick to respond to emails, and like I said earlier, he really cares about his students and their success. More professors at GCSU should try to be like Mr. Fowler because he works extremely hard and it shows. Best professor at GCSU hands down."

"I really loved how Fowler hand wrote the most important information. Not only did he have to provide the most to-the-point definitions so he didn't write too much, but it made him move at a do-able pace. He only gave you the information you needed. He was responsive outside of class hours and office hours. He is one of the most realistic graders I have ever met. If a portion of the class read a test question differently than he wanted it to come across, he would give everyone points back so nobody would be at a disadvantage. There was no pressure in his class. He didn't randomly call on people and let us feel comfortable to answer rather than get anxious. There was no sense of shame in a wrong answer. I hope I get to take his courses again in the future."

"GEORGIA COLLEGE PERSON READING THIS, PLEASE GIVE THIS MAN A RAISE OR A GOOD CONTRACT (if he hasn't received one yet) Steven Fowler is the absolute best Information Systems professor I've had yet at this university. He is an extremely relatable person and he makes something as difficult as Database Management fun. I can not express how nervous I was to take this class, but now I look back and laugh at how wrong I was. This course has made me want to work on databases in the future. GCSU really knew what they were doing when they hired this guy."

"People have told me that as an MIS Major, Database management is one of the most important classes that I will take. Dr. Fowler is the best teacher at Georgia College to teach this course. He obviously has an extremely detailed understanding of databases and the nature in which they operate. He is very willing to work with students and explain any questions or concerns that they may have. Other teachers read off of a slideshow and make classes like this a bear to understand. Dr. Fowler's lessons were truly helpful in this class because he jumped right into sql statements with us and made sure we knew what was going on. Best teacher for the best class at Georgia College"

"I Truly enjoyed the course, I believe it is one of those courses where you get out of what you put in and I could have definitely made more of an active effort to stay engaged. Brad is probably one of the most

understanding and down to earth teachers on this campus and it is always a pleasure learning from him."

"Dr. Fowler makes every single class engaging and teaches in a way that really aids students in learning a subject that before, we did not know a single thing about. I am grateful for the job that he does and how he teaches me."

"Mr. Fowler was the best professor I had this semester. He was very helpful and attentive to students questions in class and was very nice to everyone. he needs a raise! The way he structured his class was very low maintenance, but made it very easy to learn and perform well in the class. I have no complaints with Mr. Fowler, he has done an outstanding job."

"Dr. Fowler is an incredible teacher. He has a lot of patience and he is very well spoken. It is clear that he respects each of his students, as we respect him back. I would recommend this class to any of my peers, regardless of their major. Dr. Fowler has gone out of his way multiple times to ensure my success as a student and I am very grateful to have had him as my teacher."

"Professor Fowler, makes a garganchuan effort to involve all the students in each and every lesson. He does an amazing job at making the material simple to understand and takes a lot of time to explain concepts that the class had a hard time understanding the first go around. Professor Fowler deserves a raise!"

LOVE this teacher. Is the reason that I ended up going MIS major. Please keep him around as long as you can. He is by far the BEST teacher at Georgia college in my opinion."

"CREATE TABLE BestTeacher (TeacherID INT NOT NULL IDENTITY (1,1), FirstName VARCHAR (40), LastName VARCHAR (40) PRIMARY KEY (TeacherID)); INSERT BestTeacher VALUES ('Steven', 'Fowler');"

Advanced Networking

"Mr. Fowler has been the highlight of my time as an MIS major. His teaching is down to earth, professional, and of the highest quality. He seeks to adapt to teaching us in a way that is pleasing for us as students and him as a professor. He has done all he can to provide us with everything we need for success and I hope the best for him continuing on past my time here."

"Professor Fowler has consistently applied his expertise in the classroom for me, and my classmates over the last four years. He in sincerely my favorite teacher that I've had at this university."

"Professor Fowler has been my favorite CBIS instructor out of all that I have taken. I am sad that this was my last class with him. He explains and demonstrates the course content in GREAT detail and really helps his students succeed. Thank you so much!!!"

"Mr. Fowler has to be the most passionate, professional, overall amazing professor I've ever had. I've had 3 classes with him and have never had any issues understanding any of the content with his aid. He made this class a blast and couldn't recommend him more because of his enthusiasm and collective knowledge of life and IT."