

Faculty Excellence Award Application Form



GEORGIA'S PUBLIC
LIBERAL ARTS UNIVERSITY

Name: Brooke Conaway

Rank: Assistant Professor of Economics

Department: Economics and Finance Department

Award applying for:

(Check one)

	Excellence in Teaching Award*
	Excellence in Scholarship & Creative Endeavors Award*
	Excellence in University Service*
x	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 nominations are due by November 18, 2016 to the college Dean.

University nominations are due March 10, 2017 to the Dr. Steve Jones.

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 Academic Affairs Intranet Forms Page – section titled “Awards”

<https://intranet.gcsu.edu/academic-affairs/policies-procedures-and-practices-manual-forms>

It is requested that all application materials be inserted into one document, saved, and submitted electronically for consideration.

Provide **Required Documentation** here:



Department of Economics and Finance
J. Whitney Bunting College of Business
Campus Box 14
Milledgeville, Georgia 31061-0490
Phone (478) 445-4210
Fax (478) 445-1535

Awards Committee

October 28, 2016

Letter of Nomination for Dr. Brooke Conaway

I am writing to nominate Brooke Conaway for the award for Excellence in Scholarship of Teaching and Learning. Brooke is a true teacher-scholar, imaginatively innovating in the classroom and documenting the impact in various research outlets. Moreover, she has been instrumental in developing new classes that align the department's offerings with the mission of Georgia College to incite critical thinking as a core tenant of the student experience. The combination of innovation and creativity in the classroom and subsequent production of pedagogical articles makes Brooke an embodiment of the Georgia College mission and deserving of recognition by this award.

Over the last five years, I have had the pleasure of working with Brooke on creating three new critical thinking core curriculum courses with an economics focus. The courses are Swansonomics, Freakonomics, and Sex, Drugs, and Economics. Each of these courses focuses on helping new college students understand vitally important economic concepts using examples and events they can connect with. The status quo among business academics is to find the best application of course concepts in industry or firms. However, students have yet to experience those environments, rendering abstract concepts still difficult to understand when applied to these settings. Brooke is excellent at "meeting the students where they exist," designing examples and even courses that build economic lessons into the experiences students regularly encounter. This kind of innovation is quite uncommon in economics and Brooke is exceptionally good at it. As evidence, the courses she helped create are popular on campus and, based on assessment outcomes, successful in conveying the kind of knowledge and critical thinking skills economists want young people to acquire in our courses.

In an effort to help other economic educators succeed, Brooke has written two pedagogical papers that are designed to help teachers at both the high school and college level implement these new techniques in their classrooms. Her research has been published in the *Journal of Economics and Finance Education* and *Perspectives on Economic Education Research*. Her research has also been presented at four international research conferences. Dr. Conaway's papers carefully explain how these courses can be taught, assessed, and improved over time. They also provide examples of ways to weave these innovative techniques into more traditional courses. Brooke is even developing a website so that practitioners can more easily access the content of her Swansonomics course.

Brooke constantly strives to improve her teaching and the teaching of others in her profession. In short, I can think of no one more deserving of the Excellence in Scholarship of Teaching and Learning award.

Sincerely,

Christopher Clark, Professor
Department of Economics and Finance

Milledgeville • Macon • Warner Robins

*Georgia College and State University, established in 1889, is Georgia's Public Liberal Arts University,
University System of Georgia*

Narrative of Research Questions

Providing students with opportunities to apply what they have learned, engaging them in the learning process, and using innovative, assessment-backed pedagogical methods are major SoTL principles I feel I have worked to further, particularly over the last two years. I have been heavily involved in course innovation, the development of assessment-backed pedagogical strategies, and the dissemination of peer-reviewed research on creative pedagogical methods with wide applications. These efforts are most apparent in the creation three new GC1Y courses (Freakonomics; Sex, Drugs, and Economics; and Swansonomics), which were the product of collaborative efforts with two of my colleagues, Chris Clark and JJ Arias. These critical thinking courses have resulted in two coauthored research publications over the last two years. In these papers, we describe creative, assessment-backed pedagogical methods for teaching economics to college students.

“Swansonomics: Using ‘Parks and Recreation’ to Teach Economics” (coauthored with Chris Clark), was accepted in October 2014 for publication in the *Journal of Economics and Finance Education*. This paper was based on a new GC1Y course we developed that uses quotes and video clips from the TV show, “Parks and Recreation,” to introduce freshmen to important economic concepts. It was also featured in August 2015 on the American Institute for Economic Research blog, and it was also recently featured in the Teacher Training Program sponsored by Cengage at the Academy of Economics and Finance Conference.

In this paper, we discussed the decline of university course offerings in Comparative Economic Systems across the nation. In fact, Georgia College is one of the few universities left that still offers this class as an upper-level economics elective. This particular course is increasingly important for modern students to take as it compares various political and economic systems; the same systems we see people increasingly divided over in our current political climate. Unfortunately, not many students want to take a course called Comparative Economic Systems, particularly if they are not majoring in economics. We developed Swansonomics as a means to make comparative economic systems fun and interesting, and to reach more than just the fraction of economics majors that choose to take this course.

Swansonomics is ultimately a comparative economic systems course for first year college students that uses clips from the show, “Parks and Recreation,” to motivate discussions on resource allocation, government action, and political systems. The character, Ron Swanson, is particularly interesting as he claims to be a libertarian (yet, is often closer to an anarchist). The show often plays upon the juxtaposition of Ron, who believes government can do no good, with that of Leslie Knope, who believes that government can do a lot of good. The show often deals with relevant government policies and differing political and economic views, which is perfect for a comparative economic systems course. Our paper presents an outline for other educators who want to create a similar course, or simply use clips from the show to cover some of these topics in their current courses.

The second paper, “The Economists Strike Back: Keeping economics in the core curriculum” (co-authored with J.J. Arias and Chris Clark), was written in 2015 and is published in *Perspectives on Economic Education Research*. In this paper, we explained how our new GC1Y critical thinking courses can be incorporated into traditional economics classes in order to increase student appeal and critical thinking development. We discussed some of the assignments used in these classes in order to help students hone their critical thinking skills; the assignments used in my classes are explained in more detail in the next section. In addition to very positive feedback from experts in the field, such as Dirk Mateer (economicsoftheoffice.com) and Gayle Hoyt, the methods discussed in these two publications have resulted in improved assessment outcomes for my students compared to typical “chalk and talk” methods I have used in the past. These assessment results are discussed further in the next section.

To promote high quality teaching, one of my primary objectives is to support student development through the use of active learning experiences. The SoTL-inspired pedagogical methods used in my classes are discussed in detail in each of the above peer-reviewed research publications. For example, my classes typically require multiple writing assignments where students must be able to critically analyze challenging public policy arguments. I also use collaborative classroom debates to get students engaged, and I have students present their arguments on public policy issues to the class. These experiences force students to engage in the learning process through research, writing, discussion, and problem solving that all involve real world policy issues. Student feedback and assessment data have been overwhelmingly positive. For example, one of the most common things I hear from my students is genuine excitement about being able to discuss important political and economic issues with their families and friends after taking my classes. Assessment data are discussed in the following section.

In addition to active learning experiences in the classroom, I also engage students in the research process through co-authorship and research presentations at professional academic conferences. “Do MPAA Ratings Affect Box Office Revenues?” was written with a former student, Daniel Ellis. This paper began as his senior seminar paper, and we worked together on expanding and improving the paper after he graduated. It was accepted for publication by the *Academy of Business Research Journal* in July 2014. I have also co-authored research with a recent graduate, Kelly Lee, who is currently working on her Ph.D. in economics at Colorado State University. Our paper, “Ultimate Quest for Glory: Why do some video games rule the market?” was presented at the Academy of Economics and Finance conference in 2015, and recently received a revise and resubmit decision from the *Journal of Media Economics*.

Ultimately, I enjoy pairing my love for teaching with my research activities. All of my research so far has either involved students as co-authors or been about pedagogy and education topics. My future research goals involve continuing to engage students in research, finding creative ways to help them learn in and out of the classroom, and disseminating this information to my peers.

Impact of Teaching Pedagogies

Giving students experiential learning opportunities and using innovative, assessment-backed pedagogical methods support the underlying goals of SoTL. Besides involving students in research, I have also exposed students to experiential learning through academic conferences where they may present their research. In the last two years I have taken two different groups of 7 - 9 economics majors to present their senior research at the annual Academy of Economics and Finance (AEF) Conference, and helped them apply for Georgia College Mentored Undergraduate Research and Creative Endeavors (MURACE) travel grants to cover the costs. As evidence of the student impact of this opportunity, one of our graduating seniors won the Best Undergraduate Paper Award at the 2015 conference, and six of those students were accepted into PhD programs in economics with full funding and tuition waivers.

In addition to successful graduate placements, the positive impact of my teaching pedagogies is backed by assessment data from my GC1Y courses. Of the four sections of GC1Y 1000 critical thinking courses I have taught since January 2014, the assessment data are as follows:

Area B Common Rubrics	Mastery (4)	Target (3)	Progressing (2)	Developing (1)	Did Not Meet (0)
Identifies and explains multiple intellectual approaches	1.0%	17.8%	44.6%	31.7%	5.0%
Proposed clarification of and/or response/solution to problem, topic, theme or issue	1.0%	11.9%	36.6%	42.6%	7.9%
Explanation of the issues	1.0%	7.9%	42.6%	42.6%	5.9%
Uses information effectively in support of an argument	1.0%	5.9%	38.6%	45.5%	8.9%
Conclusions and related outcomes (implications and consequences)	1.0%	4.0%	46.5%	39.6%	8.9%

According to the Area B Common Rubrics designed for GC1Y and GC2Y assessment, first year students should typically be scoring in the 1-2 range and sophomores in the 2-3 range. Of the students in my GC1Y courses over the previous two years, about half of them scored in the 2-3 range on each set of assessment criteria. I used a final project in each course to assess student performance and growth over the semester. Instructions for the final projects used for assessment purposes are provided below for each of the two courses I taught (Swansonomics and Sex, Drugs, and Economics).

GC1Y 1000: Swansonomics Policy Memo

Policy Memo/Presentation: The policy memo must be in this general format – choose a government policy, present what you think Ron Swanson’s viewpoint on that policy would be, and explain whether or not you agree with it. You will be graded on your spelling and grammar, your ability to effectively convey your position, your ability to support your position with legitimate evidence (preferably from peer reviewed academic journal articles or equally reputable sources), your ability to properly cite that evidence, and your response to major criticisms of that position. You are required to restrict the length of your memo to a maximum of 3 pages in order to help you learn to make your arguments in a concise and focused fashion. You may not choose the same topic as another student in this class.

At the end of the semester you will give a 2 minute speech summarizing your position (using supporting arguments) on your memo. Your presentation will consist of 2 minutes of explanation of your position on a specific current government policy and why you took that position (as if you were giving a brief “elevator” talk to a legislator concerning your issue). The presentation will be followed by approximately 10 minutes of questions, answers, and discussion.

The questions will be asked by me and by the other students in the class. The questions and your answers will be graded for quality. Absences during the presentations will lower your memo grade. I will grade you on your first draft and give you suggestions on how to improve your memo. I will also grade it and give you more suggestions on how you can improve your arguments before you give your presentation. Your memo grade will be an average of these two grades. Your memo grade will be worth 15% and your presentation will be worth 5% of your final grade in the class.

GC1Y 1000: Sex, Drugs, and Economics Project

Project Instructions:

Your project (worth 20% of your class grade) will be on the topic I randomly assigned to you on the first day of class. It has two parts:

Instructions for 1st part of project:

Write a short opinion paper on your assigned topic. It should be typed, 1-2 pages and double spaced. This paper does not require any research on your part; I simply want you to tell me your thoughts on the assigned topic (but, you may do cursory research if you are very unfamiliar with your topic). For each topic I have provided some questions to help guide you in thinking about your topic. There are no right or wrong answers for this part, I just want you to tell me your current opinion. If you meet the technical requirements (typed, 1-2 pages double spaced, correct topic) and you turn it in on time, you will receive a 100 on this part of your project. This part counts for 2% of your project grade.

Instructions for 2nd part of project:

The second part of your project should be typed, 3-4 pages in length (*not* including the works cited page or a title page), double-spaced and you should use a specific format of your choosing to cite your sources *in the body of the paper and in the works cited page* (MLA, Chicago, etc.). The topic should be the same topic you wrote about for the first part of the project. If you write on a topic other than the one I assigned to you on the first day of classes, you will receive a zero for this part.

You should first state whether your initial thoughts on the topic changed or stayed the same. Use economic tools, research and evidence to analyze your topic. Make sure to focus on the costs, benefits, incentives, and unintended consequences of policies governing your assigned issue. Given the current government and/or societal approach to your topic, do you think the costs outweigh the benefits or is it the other way around? Should we keep our current government policies, or should the government change these policies and why?

Your grade will not be based on the position you take; rather, it will be graded on the quality of your argument. I will grade you on your use of economic tools and credible research to back up your claims. Remember, this is not just an uninformed opinion paper like the first one you turned in – this is supposed to show that you are informed about both sides of the subject (i.e. don't cherry pick your sources or your arguments) and you can use critical thinking, economic analysis, and credible research to discuss your topic. Citing research here is imperative. Use Galileo, Google Scholar, Jstor, etc. to find credible research on your topic. Peer-reviewed research is best, but other credible sources are acceptable (try to avoid the use of newspaper articles as sources unless peer-reviewed research is cited in the article).

In addition to assigning the above final projects on which end-of-course assessments are based, I assign the following homework in both critical thinking classes.

Sex, Drugs, and Economics/Swansonomics Homework Instructions

You have 3 homework assignments due this semester (due dates are on your syllabus). You may choose your own topics for these assignments with the following 2 restrictions on your choices:

- You may not choose the same topic as your final project/policy memo
- You may not use the same topic for any other homework assignment

You may choose topics that are not necessarily things we discussed in class, but that relate to something we discussed in class during that section.

Once you have chosen your topic, find an article/blog/etc. where the author takes a stance on one side of the issue (e.g. if you picked prostitution, look for an article advocating for or against legalized or decriminalized prostitution). Then, using what you learned in class, analyze the author's arguments. Is the author considering all the relevant costs/benefits, incentive structures and unintended consequences? Is the author making any logical or economic fallacies?

In short, in your analysis I want you to point out and explain BOTH of the following:

- At least two economic guideposts that the author ignored (incentives, unintended consequences, opportunity costs, etc. – see your notes for these guideposts to help you on this part).
 - At least two logical or economic fallacies committed by the author (again, see your notes for help on this part).
-

The above homework assignments are not included in the assessment data, but in each semester I have used this assignment I have noticed marked improvement in student ability to critically analyze articles they encounter in basic Google searches. I specifically ask students not to choose a peer-reviewed article to assess for these homework assignments because I know that if they want to research a public policy topic in the future, they are most likely to just Google the topic and read from less credible sources. For this reason, I want them to be able to better analyze what they are reading. Over the last two years, my critical thinking classes have an average of 74.8 on the 1st homework assignment, and an average of 80.5 on the last homework assignment.

In addition to innovative critical thinking assignments, I have also incorporated in-class debates and experiments into many of my classes. I have been conducting a property rights experiment developed by colleagues at Berry College, Frank Stephenson and Lauren Heller. Students are asked to invest in one of two dwellings – a shack or a house – where each have different investment costs. At first, they do not have secure property rights and I randomly (by coin flip) expropriate some of their investments at the end of the first round. Then, I randomly assign property rights and ask them to invest again. Those with property rights cannot have their investments expropriated. It shows students the differences in private investment under secure property rights compared to insecure property rights. It helps students see why investors are hesitant to build and expand homes or businesses in developing countries with poor institutions.

As discussed in our paper, “The Economists Strike Back: Keeping economics in the core curriculum,” the success I have had in boosting student interest in economics comes in large part from public policy and other real world examples I use in class to illustrate the importance of economics. Students zone out when you talk about the market for “widgets,” but they find the markets for heroin and prostitution fascinating. They are bored when you talk about taxes on goods, but they are excited when you discuss the effects of soda taxes on beer consumption and show a funny clip on soda taxes from the show “Parks and Recreation.” Using controversial public policy topics gives students a memorable example that sticks in their heads. Giving them opportunities to apply what they have learned from these memorable examples to other real world examples helps to avoid the “memory dump” that many students do once a class is over.

Getting students excited about economics is challenging, but is also an immensely rewarding experience. It is my favorite part of the job, and I think the underlying principles of SoTL are to find what works for students and share it with others. I have tried my best to do that over my career, but particularly over the last two years through new course development, critical thinking assignments, learning outside the classroom, assessment, and dissemination of peer-reviewed pedagogical research.

Brooke Conaway

Georgia College & State University
Department of Economics & Finance • CBX 014 • Milledgeville, GA 31061
brooke.conaway@gcsu.edu • 478.445.1240 (office) • 478.456.9917 (cell)

Curriculum Vitae • March 2017

Education

Ph.D. Applied Economics, *Clemson University*, 2009
M.A. Applied Economics, *Clemson University*, 2007
B.S. Economics, *Georgia College & State University*, 2003

Teaching and research interests: Industrial Organization; Controversial Economic Issues; Sex, Drugs and Economics; Education policy; Pedagogy; Public Choice; Economic Growth

Academic Positions

Assistant Professor of Economics, Georgia College & State University. (August 1, 2010 - Present).
Tenure track starting August 2012
Assistant Professor of Economics, Georgia Southern University. (August 1, 2009 - July 31, 2010).
Instructor/Graduate Instructor, Clemson University. (August 15, 2004 - June 30, 2009).

Teaching

Georgia College & State University Courses Taught

ECON 2100, Economics and Society, 11 courses.
ECON 2105, Principles of Macroeconomics, 3 courses.
ECON 2106, Principles of Microeconomics, 10 courses.
ECON 3660, Controversial Economic Issues, 3 courses.
ECON 3840, Economic Growth, 3 courses.
ECON 3620, Industrial Organization, 3 courses.
ECON/FINC 3820, Money & Banking, 1 course.
ECON/FINC 3830, Fin Markets & Institutions, 1 course.
GC1Y 1000, Critical Thinking: Sex, Drugs & Econ, 9 courses.
GC1Y 1000, Critical Thinking: Swansonomics, 3 courses.

Georgia College & State University Directed Student Learning

"Money and banking: A local regulatory field study," (January 2016 - May 2016), Independent study: Brent Echols
"Study of game revenues," (June 2014 - July 2014), Independent study: Kelly Lee
"Organization theory," (January 2014 - May 2014), Independent study: Johan Wadstein
"Extralegal economies," (June 2013 - June 2013), Independent study: Bailey Dobbs
"Intermediate microeconomics," (August 2012 - December 2012), Independent study: Caroline Faber
"Constituency, legislature and government sizes," (January 2012 - May 2012), Independent study: Leah Kitashima
"Effects of Medicare and Medicaid spending on overall health outcomes," (February 2011 - May 2011), Directed student research: Jordan Bennett.

Research

Journal Articles

"The economists strike back: Keeping economics in the core curriculum." *Perspectives on Economic Education Research* 2016, 10 (1), p. 71-93 (with Christopher Clark and JJ Arias). Peer reviewed.
"Parents, homevoters, and public school employees: An analysis of voting patterns in the 2012 Georgia charter school amendment referendum" *Journal of School Choice*, 2016, 10 (2), p. 249-269 (with Ben Scafidi and

Frank Stephenson). Peer reviewed.

“Swansonomics: Using ‘Parks and Recreation’ to teach economics.” *Journal of Economics and Finance Education*, Summer 2015, 14 (1), p. 41-61 (with Christopher Clark). Peer reviewed.

“Do MPAA ratings affect box office revenues?” *Academy of Business Research Journal*, 2015 Volume I, p. 64-88 (with Daniel Ellis). Peer reviewed.

“Ultimate quest for glory: Why do some video games rule the market?” revise and resubmit at *Journal of Media Economics* (with Kelly Lee). Peer reviewed.

Book Chapters

“Workforce development requires educational reform.” 2009. In *Unleashing Capitalism: A Prescription for Economic Prosperity in South Carolina*, Edited by Peter Calcagno, Joshua Hall and Russell Sobel. Columbia, SC: The South Carolina Policy Council Education Foundation, 171-184.

Popular Press

“More Choices for Military, Foster Parents.” 2010. Savannah, GA: *Business in Savannah*.

Research in Progress

“Unobserved competition in baseball: Better looks, better pay?” (with Leng Ling)

“Explaining support for Washington’s charter school legislation.” (with Ben Scafidi and Frank Stephenson)

"Interest group formation across US States" (work in progress).

"Interest groups and state economic development" (work in progress).

“The celebrity effect on election outcomes.” (with Justin Roush)

“Do merit-based scholarships affect enlistment rates?” (with Chris Clark and Justin Roush)

Presentations

“Interest group formation across US states” Southern Economic Association Conference, Washington, DC: November 2016. Invited presentation.

“Do ESRB (Entertainment Software Ratings Board) ratings affect video game revenues?” Academy of Economics and Finance Conference, Jacksonville, FL: February 2015. Peer reviewed.

“Do legislators vote the preferences of their constituents? The case of Georgia’s 2012 charter amendment” Southern Economic Association Conference, Atlanta, GA: November 2014. Peer reviewed.

“Swansonomics” Association of Private Enterprise Education Conference, Las Vegas, NV: April 2014. Peer reviewed.

"Do MPAA ratings affect revenues at the box office?" Academy of Economics and Finance Conference, Chattanooga, TN: February 2014. Peer reviewed.

"Who Supports the creation of charter schools?" Southern Economic Association Conference, Tampa, FL: November 2013. Peer reviewed.

"Sex, drugs and controversial issues in the economics classroom" Association of Private Enterprise Education Conference, Las Vegas, NV: April 2012 .Invited presentation.

Grants and Fellowships

Charles G. Koch Charitable Foundation Grant (September 2016-May 2017)
Undergraduate Research and Creative Endeavors Student Group Travel Grant (February 2014).
J. Whitney Bunting Summer Research Grant (June 2014 - August 2014).
The Economics of Education Policy Center Fellowship (June 2014).
Charles G. Koch Charitable Foundation Grant (August 2011 - May 2012).
Charles G. Koch Charitable Foundation Grant (January 2011 - May 2011).

Honors and Awards

J. Whitney Bunting College of Business Scholarship of Teaching and Learning Award (February 2017).
GC Honors Student Graduation Faculty Member (May 2016 and May 2017).
GC Student Athlete Most Impactful Faculty Member (January 2016).
J. Whitney Bunting College of Business Excellence in Teaching Award (April 2015).
Favorite Teacher Award, Alpha Omicron Pi (May 2014).
Significant and Positive Impact, GCSU (October 2012).

Professional Memberships

Academy of Economics and Finance (February 2014 - Present).
American Association of University Women (August 2014 – Present).
American Economic Association (January 2015 - Present).
Association of Private Enterprise Education (February 2012 - Present).
Foundation for Economic Education (FEE) Faculty Network (November 2015 - Present).
Southern Economic Association (November 2013 - Present).

Service

University, College, Department, and Professional Service - *Georgia College & State University*

Committee Member, Liberal Arts Council (November 2016 – Present).
Diversity Action Planning Committee. (July 2014 - Present).
Committee Member, Technology Advisory Committee. (February 2013 - Present).
Committee Chair, Honors and Awards Committee, College of Business. (January 2017 – Present).
Committee Member, Honors and Awards Committee, College of Business. (January 2013 – December 2017).
Committee Member, UR Mentor Awards Committee. (January 2013 - Present).
Faculty Judge for Best Undergraduate Paper Award, Academy of Economics and Finance (February 2017).
Committee Member, New Faculty Search Committee, Economics & Finance. (December 2013 – May 2016).
Committee Member, Classroom Redesign Committee, College of Business. (September 2011 - April 2013).
Committee Member, Search for a CETL Director. (March 2012 - December 2012).

Mentorship Activities - *Georgia College & State University*

Faculty Advisor, Economics and Investment Club. (July 2014 - Present).
Faculty Advisor, Georgia College Chapter of Young Americans for Liberty. (November 2015 - Present).
Faculty Mentor, Student Group Travel to Academy of Economics and Finance Conference. (February 2015 & February 2016).
President's Scholarship Judge. (December 2014 & December 2015).
Faculty Advisor, One-Wheeled Wonder Unicycling Club. (March 2014 - Present).
Student Book Salons, 16 participants. (August 2011 - August 2012).

Community

Baldwin Bulletin interview, Counterfeit goods. (February 2015).
Baldwin Bulletin interview, Black Friday sales. (December 2013).
Radio Free Georgia College, Radio show co-host with Chris Clark (2011-2012).
Volunteer with the Heart of Georgia Humane Society (2009 - Present).



Department of Economics and Finance
J. Whitney Bunting College of Business
Campus Box 14
Milledgeville, Georgia 31061-0490
Phone (478) 445-4210
Fax (478) 445-1535

Dear Awards Committee,

I am writing to nominate Dr. Brooke Conaway for the award of Excellence in Scholarship of Teaching and Learning. Brooke has published several papers in education and pedagogical journals. Other applicants will boast the same and, to me, that is insufficient to win this award. What sets Brooke apart is that her pedagogical approach and published research is centered on meeting students in the space in which *they* learn, not boxing them into the easiest textbook applications. As such it is at the frontier of teaching and learning scholarship.

First, Brooke created and teaches GC1Y critical thinking courses on Sex, Drugs, and Economics, and Swansonomics (discussed below). These courses take complex economic concepts and apply them to issues most familiar to students. Experiential learning has been shown to produce excellent learning outcomes, but it's difficult to facilitate. A second-best approach is to use situations that students frequently experience, at which Brooke excels. Her paper entitled "Swansonomics" was written because of Brooke's GC1Y course. It is a great example of her creativity in enhancing student learning through tapping into the space in which they experience the world. In that paper Brooke demonstrates how a main character of a popular TV show can be used to illustrate a vast array of economic concepts spanning principles and upper level classes.

Secondly, Brooke's pedagogical approach includes classroom simulations to create experiential learning. Each semester Brooke conducts a classroom game illustrating the importance of property rights for investment levels. Investing is likely a foreign concept to students. However, creating a classroom game in which students learn the basics of an investment and their interaction with property rights makes the economic theory come alive! She will be presenting this simulation in a departmental brown bag this March. This illustrates Brooke's commitment as an academic to the scholarship of teaching as she vets her ideas frequently in this fashion to her colleagues.

Lastly, Brooke has great ideas for future research in liberal arts teaching pedagogy. She is currently involved in planning an Economics and Theater course in which students take an economics related quote from popular film or television series and write a short play surrounding the concept. This course would strongly reinforce our liberal arts mission at Georgia College, merging what appear to be completely disparate disciplines. The literature in economics pedagogy is absent of liberal arts pedagogical opportunities. Brooke will be at the frontier of this research.

I fully endorse Dr. Brooke Conaway for the award of Excellence in Scholarship of Teaching and Learning for both her current efforts and promised future publications. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Justin R. Roush, PhD (University of Tennessee, 2015)
Assistant Professor of Economics
Georgia College & State University
Justin.roush@gcsu.edu

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Letter of Support – Dr. Brooke Conaway

Awards Committee

March 7, 2017

It is my sincere pleasure to enthusiastically recommend Brooke Conaway for the Excellence in Scholarship of Teaching and Learning Award. She is a natural and gifted teacher who shares her knowledge of effective teaching and learning through interesting and quality research.

Brooke has an excellent rapport with students while at the same time challenging them to go beyond the shallow arguments and facile platitudes that often pass for real thinking. She does an excellent job of using current, relevant and entertaining examples to demonstrate economic concepts. Brooke teaches the economic way of thinking in such a way that she is essentially teaching them how to think—a new experience for some of our students. She is also always seeking new ways to convey economic concepts, improve her teaching and improve the economics major. Students respect her knowledge and expertise, but they also feel comfortable enough to give honest feedback. This means that she incorporates both formal and informal assessment into her teaching strategies. Through peer-review research and conference presentations, she has shared some of her successful strategies for engaging students in an entertaining way, while at the same time challenging them with rigorous material.

Brooke cares deeply not only about the education of her own students but of all our economics majors. One of the many ways she contributes to our department is in developing new courses. She helped to design three offerings for the GC1Y course: Sex, Drugs, and Economics; Freakonomics; and Swansonomics. She has recently published two papers on curriculum design and course development. “Swansonomics: Using ‘Parks and Recreation’ to Teach Economics,” was published in the *Journal of Economics and Finance Education* and has been featured in a professional research blog and in a pedagogy workshop at an academic conference. “The Economists Strike Back: Keeping Economic in the Core Curriculum,” is forthcoming in *Perspectives in Economic Education Research*.

Brooke is especially good at assessing student learning through written assignments and classroom debates. Her teaching style naturally prepares her best students to investigate interesting research questions. It is not a coincidence that her remaining publications are co-authored with former students. More than any other professor I know, Brooke truly integrates teaching, research and the scholarship of teaching and learning. She is highly deserving of receiving the Excellence in Scholarship of Teaching and Learning Award.

Sincerely,

J. J. Arias
Professor of Economics

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Office of the Dean

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Phone 478-445-5497
Fax 445-5249
www.gcsu.edu/business

March 7, 2017

Dr. Steven Jones
University Excellence Awards

Dear Dr. Jones:

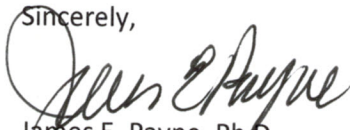
I wholeheartedly endorse Dr. Brooke Conaway for the university's Excellence in the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning Award. Dr. Conaway has certainly "set the bar" for both quality teaching and innovative approaches to delivering her economics courses. During her tenure at Georgia College, Dr. Conaway has taught ten different courses, all with the rigor required of the subject matter, but more importantly, her ability to translate often times difficult, abstract concepts to everyday situations which students can fully appreciate. This is particularly evident from her work with GC1Y courses, as she has developed several courses, Swansonomics, Freakonomics, and Sex, Drugs, and Economics, as each course brings the economic way of thinking to non-economics majors.

Dr. Conaway's teaching extends beyond the classroom with her on-going involvement with the student Economics and Investment Club and over the past three years has mentored students in the undergraduate paper competition at the meetings of the Academy of Economics and Finance. During this time, Georgia College students have won first place in the undergraduate paper competition twice, a testament to the dedication of Dr. Conaway in preparing students for the competition. Her efforts in this regard has been supported internally through the Undergraduate Research and Creative Endeavors Student Group Grant program at Georgia College as well as receiving several grants to support undergraduate research from the Charles Koch Foundation. Furthermore, Dr. Conaway's work has been recognized in receiving several awards: Georgia College Student Athlete Most Impactful Faculty Member, the J. Whitney Bunting College of Business Excellence in Teaching Award, Favorite Teacher Award from Alpha Omicron Pi, and Georgia College Significant and Positive Impact. In addition to serving as the faculty advisor to the Economics and Investment Club, Dr. Conaway serves as the faculty advisor to the Georgia College Chapter of Young Americans for Liberty and as a judge for the annual President's Scholarship Competition.

Not only is Dr. Conaway a gifted teacher, she is developing a strong reputation within the economics education area for her scholarship. Her article, "The Economists Strike Back: Keeping Economics in the Core Curriculum", is forthcoming in *Perspectives on Economic Education Research* and her work on school choice entitled "Parents, homeowners, Public School Employees: An Analysis of Voting Patterns in the 2012 Georgia Charter School Amendment Referendum" was recently published in the *Journal of School Choice*. She has also co-authored with a student a paper entitled "Do MPAA Ratings affect Box Office Revenues?" published in the *Academy of Business Research Journal* along with her development of the Swansonomics course for GC1Y appearing in the *Journal of Economics and Finance Education*. In addition to her published work related to the scholarship of teaching and learning, Dr. Conaway has also been active in presenting her work in the area of economics education at well-respected academic conferences: Southern Economic Association, Association of Private Enterprise Education Conference, and the Academy of Economics and Finance Conference.

In summary, I cannot think of a faculty member more deserving of the Excellence Award in Scholarship of Teaching and Learning. Dr. Brooke Conaway embodies the ideal teacher-scholar who understands the importance of not only quality instruction, but more importantly, sharing her work through meaning scholarship. I wholeheartedly endorse without reservation Dr. Brooke Conaway for this recognition.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "James E. Payne". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent initial "J".

James E. Payne, Ph.D.

Dean, J. Whitney Bunting College of Business