

Faculty Excellence Award Application Form



Name: Stephanie M. McClure

Rank: Professor

Department: Government & Sociology

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, 2019.

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](#).

Stephanie McClure's Application Portfolio for Faculty Excellence Award

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January 10, 2020

Dear Excellence in Teaching Award Committee:

I write as Interim Chair of the Department of Government & Sociology, in support of the nomination of Dr. Stephanie McClure for the Excellence in Teaching Award. She has proven to be excellent teacher and a wonderful asset to our faculty.

Dr. McClure's teaching embodies some of the great aspects of Georgia College faculty and programs. I cannot think of a more transformative experience for our students, and Dr. McClure has succeeded in bringing this opportunity to Georgia College, especially because she has already provided exceptional mentorship, undergraduate research experiences and, in parallel, guidance on admission and matriculation of these students to research-focused graduate program.

In the last several years, much of her emphasis has been on mentoring undergraduate students in their research. She plays a significant role in providing intellectual stimulation for her student protégés. Through working together on a research project of mutual interest, students become colleagues with her. Sometimes these relationships last long after the student completes his or her degree and ultimately develop into strong professional interactions. Her students gained important insight into the kinds of careers they want to pursue through their undergraduate research experiences, and she played a key role by providing advice, making observations, and giving feedback.

Based on my observations and my conversations in and outside of the classroom with Dr. McClure, she always creates a rigorous classroom environment which integrates core knowledge, critical thinking, and challenging conversations. She requires students to immerse themselves in the readings, data, and literature of her discipline and apply it to real world issues and their own experiences. Dr. McClure uses this as the basis for thought-provoking and challenging conversations that allow students to question themselves and the world around them. She also brings her empirically grounded approach to other classrooms as well with a book on race that she co-edited. Even after many years of teaching, and being very good at what she does, I know she is constantly improving her curriculum and her methods to adapt to the changes in her students.

She also makes the enormous contributions to teaching outside of the classroom. Dr. McClure leads discussions and engages students on campus and even across the globe while hosting a Times Talk, a community forum, or a student meeting on campus. She has also led a number of study abroad semesters, which only further demonstrates her love for learning from a global perspective and sharing this passion with her students.

Additionally, Dr. McClure's impact is not just on Georgia College's campus. She is an active participant in the community and brings her expertise to solving community problems. I consider her to be a pillar and a well-respected leader in the Milledgeville community. Her teaching transcends the classroom and she generously shares her knowledge when it is needed.

In conclusion, Dr. McClure is a remarkable and inspiring individual who deserves recognition for her dedication to her profession, her students, and Georgia College. Her pleasant demeanor and sunny personality makes her a joy to be around. As a tireless toiler in the vineyard of higher education she is a role model not just for me, but to an untold number of my colleagues. I highly recommend Dr. McClure for the Excellence in Teaching Award.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Min Kim". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Min" and last name "Kim" clearly distinguishable.

Min Kim, PhD
Associate Professor of Public Administration
Interim Department Chair, Government & Sociology
Email: min.kim@gcsu.edu



Department of Government and Sociology

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College of Arts and Sciences
February 25, 2020

Faculty Awards Committee
Georgia College & State University

To Whom It May Concern:

Please accept this letter as my highest recommendation for the Georgia College Excellence in Teaching Award on behalf of Dr. Stephanie McClure. Her approach to teaching sociology courses is embraced and highly valued by students, as she is among our most popular professors in Sociology and the Department of Government and Sociology. Students who have taken her courses repeatedly sign up for others that she teaches. My experience in talking with students is that she is one of few professors whose courses elicit praise and enthusiasm from them, and this is evidenced in her student evaluations, which are consistently above averages for the program, department, college, and university. In fact, students often discuss her course content in my classroom, which enhances the learning experience for themselves and other students. Dr. McClure is highly valued by both faculty and students for her ability to effectively teach, challenge, and mentor students.

Dr. McClure's teaching approach guarantees that students experience moving moments of self-reflection and critical analysis about their world, which exemplify the mission of Georgia College. She carefully designs the activities in her courses to offer several opportunities for student engagement, reflection, and evaluation through writing and discussion. She also uses innovative service learning pedagogy to provide opportunities for students to actively and critically engage with course material, and she focuses these projects on student learning objectives. She has used several different projects in one of her courses, which makes adopting this pedagogy more challenging than teaching the same material in the same way. Different projects carry distinct student learning objectives and student assessment, so there is need for continuous planning, development, and on-going implementation. Her service-learning approach teaches students critical lessons about social and community issues while giving them an opportunity to provide valuable service.

She challenges students to consider their own assumptions, while also asking them to critique the assumptions of human nature. One of the primary values of most faculty in the sociology discipline is to understand how our social structures affects the lives of diverse citizens, to appreciate how social policy and practice unfold, and to impart these values through our teaching. A relatively undisputed facet of knowledge among our scholars is that social structures do not act without bias, and sometimes fails to consider intersectionality of identity. As we continue to analyze how social structures work, we grapple with how to emphasize the need for critical analysis of our social systems few of our students have questioned as fallible.

Milledgeville • Macon • Warner Robins

Georgia College, the state's designated public liberal arts university, combines the educational experience expected at esteemed private liberal arts colleges with the affordability of public higher education.

Thus, Dr. McClure insists that we recognize the intersectionality of humanity as individuals and groups in social structures and she does this by allowing students to consider their own humanity. She challenges one lead assumption people have about the social systems: that humans are in disadvantaged social positions because they deserve to be there. In her classes, students analyze the idea that social policy and practice are more responsible for someone ending up in disadvantaged social positions than the actions of that one individual. I'm appreciative of a colleague like Dr. Stephanie McClure, as she is adept at giving students the resources and guidance to consider how society is created at the advantage of some and the disadvantage of others in our country, and in this consideration, they are doing that critical assessment that makes a Georgia College education priceless. Even students from other majors and ideologies are bound to consider the values of humanity in more profound ways after taking her class; I know this because I have heard it from many of her former students.

She also excels at mentoring students throughout their college education and motivates them to apply themselves to fulfill their potential as learners, scholars, and citizens. Helping students successfully negotiate challenges of college and academic life is a time-consuming endeavor; yet she embraces these opportunities partly because they enrich her own career and life. Dr. McClure also serves as one of the most effective and trusted mentors in our department, evidenced partly by the number of student visitors to her office every semester. She embodies the effective mentor role in several ways. First, she has an honest personality that evokes the trust of students, making herself available and approachable to them. Second, she makes it apparent that her belief in helping students achieve their best is something she takes to heart. Finally, she acts as an effective mentor because she holds students accountable; she informs them that they must take responsibility for their own success, as mentors can only act in a supporting role. There are countless students who have succeeded at Georgia College because of mentors like Dr. McClure, and I know most of her former students would attest to this.

If Georgia College promises to deliver critical and engaging educational experiences to its students, Dr. McClure is one of the vehicles in which this is accomplished. She is a valuable colleague because she is motivated and driven by improving the student experience and maximizing student learning outcomes. She is the dedicated professional who has student learning at heart and her teaching and mentoring philosophies embody this. She is well deserving of this award.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Sara Buck Doude". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name and title.

Sara Buck Doude, Ph.D.
Associate Professor



Georgia's Public Liberal Arts University

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Wednesday 26 February 2020

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing today to give my strongest recommendation to Stephanie McClure for the university-level Excellence in Teaching award. Over my sixteen years of teaching, I have had the privilege of working alongside and learning from many talented educators. Without exaggeration, I can say that Stephanie is among the very finest colleagues I have ever had.

Stephanie has an enviable ability to thread together two seemingly-paradoxical elements of education: to both set challenging demands for her students and to elicit their admiration and respect. Typically, as I can attest to in my own teaching experience, one can do one or the other of these but rarely both. Turning up the charisma and charm usually only last until the first paper or test is graded, but Stephanie is consistently able to captivate her students not only over a semester or a few years but long after her students have been graduated. Stephanie touches students in profound ways.

Stephanie approaches her work here with a passion. Even when the semesters begin to grind on us, Steph is somehow able to maintain an enthusiastic curiosity with her students. It is never only intellectual curiosity, though; it is always infused with a radical empathy. We are so often encouraged today by administrators to consider how we are preparing our students for their lives after college. It is difficult to imagine a better legacy for a professor or an institution than to release out into the world people who care about other people and who have the intellectual tools to do structural change. Stephanie engenders such zeal.

Having known Stephanie for eleven years, I feel quite confident in giving my strongest recommendation for her as being worthy of this award. Georgia College is very, very lucky to have her. Her students are better for having her, and my students are better having her set a standard and an example for me.

In short, I hold Stephanie McClure in the absolute highest regard and give my strongest recommendation.

Sincerely,

Bradley A. Koch, Ph.D.
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*Georgia College & State University, established in 1889, is Georgia's Public Liberal Arts University.
University System of Georgia*

Stephanie M. McClure
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Research and Teaching Interests

Social Stratification/Inequality, Sociology of Education (American Higher Education)

Current Position

Professor, Sociology – Georgia College & State University, Milledgeville, GA

Education

- Ph.D.** Sociology University of Georgia, 2005
Dissertation: Voluntary Associations and the African American College Student Experience (advisor: Dr. Reuben A.B. May)
- M.A.** Sociology University of Georgia, 2002
Thesis: Exploring the Meaning of Membership: Black Greek Men on a Predominantly White Campus (advisor: Dr. Reuben A.B. May)
- B. J.** Broadcast Journalism/Black Studies minor University of Missouri-Columbia, 1998
Magna cum Laude

Selected Employment/Experience

All at Georgia College & State University, Milledgeville, GA

Coordinator, GC Peer Educators (Fall 2018-present) *Office of Inclusive Excellence*

Acting Chair, Department of Government & Sociology (Fall 2015-Spring 2016)

Sociology Program Coordinator (Spring 2011 – Fall 2015)

Professor (August 2015-Present)

Associate Professor (August 2010 – August 2015)

Assistant Professor (August 2005 – August 2010)

Study Abroad Program Faculty (Summer 2009/Summer 2016 -Waterford Ireland,

Summer 2013/Summer 2020 – Montepulciano, Italy)

Courses Taught: Introductory Sociology in Ireland/Italy, Sociology of Religion in Ireland (2009), Sociology of Modern Ireland (2016), Globalization and Hegemony: Social Thought (2013) Sociology of Modern Italy (2020)

Honors and Awards

Southern Regional Education Board Doctoral Scholars Program

Faculty Mentor of the Year, 2019

Faculty Excellence in Service Award, Department of Government & Sociology, 2018

Faculty Excellence in Scholarship Award, Department of Government & Sociology, 2015

Faculty Excellence in Research and Publication Award, GCSU, 2007

Selected Publications

S. McClure and C. Harris (editors). (2014/2018 2e). [*Getting Real About Race: Hoodies, Mascots, Model Minorities, and Other Conversations*](#). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

S. McClure and J. Bridgeforth (former student). (2015). Social Capital and Higher Education. In DeVitis & Sasso (Eds.) *Higher Education & Society*. New York: Peter Lang Publishers

E. Meanwell, H. Patel (former student), & S. McClure. (2014). "Well, That Culture Really Values Education": Culture Versus Structure in Educational Attainment. In *Getting Real About Race: Hoodies, Mascots, Model Minorities, and Other Conversations*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Selected Presentations

S. McClure (w/ M. DuBois and J. Bridgeforth; current or former students). *"It's Just a Sales Job with Too Little Soul": Perceptions of College Admissions Officers*. Paper presented at the Southern Sociological Society Annual Conference, Atlanta, GA, April 2019.

S. McClure (w/ Chelsey Adams, former student, and Bethany Van Brown). *Crisis of Boundaries: What Role Science in Post-Trump America?* Paper presented at the Southern Sociological Society Annual Conference, New Orleans, LA, April 2018.

S. McClure (session presider/discussant). *After Charlottesville: Contexts Magazine on White Nationalism, Confederate Statues, and Trump*. Thematic session at the Southern Sociological Society Annual Conference, New Orleans, LA, April 2018.

S. McClure (w/ Brad Koch, Sara Doude, and Hersheda Patel). *Getting Real About Race: Tools and Tips for Facilitating Difficult Dialogues in the Classroom*. Session presented at the Southern Sociological Society Annual Meeting, Greenville, SC, April 2017.

S. McClure. *Building an Adaptable Introductory Sociology Course for Study Abroad*. Paper presented at the Southern Sociological Society Annual Conference, Atlanta, GA, April 2016.

S. McClure (w/ D. Bacallao, former student and J. Turner). *Student Engagement and Academic Success in a Summer Bridge Program: Exploring the Impact of Parental Education*. Paper presented at the Southern Sociological Society Annual Conference, Atlanta, GA, April 2016

S. McClure (w/ L. Aisami, former student and S. Augustine). "Early College Students as Organizational Border Crossers: Challenges to meaningful membership in the wider campus community." Paper presented at the Southern Sociological Society Annual Conference, New Orleans, LA, March 2015.

S. McClure (with J. Bridgeforth and H. Patel, former students). "Public Higher Education: Mission Shift and Campus Racial Composition." Paper presented at the Southern Sociological Society Annual Conference, New Orleans, LA, March 2012.

S. McClure. "Teaching race, what it's not: Biology and human variation." Paper presented at the Southern Sociological Society Annual Conference, New Orleans, LA, April 2009.

S. McClure. "Institutional Diversity and Collective Memory: African Americans on a predominantly white campus." Paper presented at the Southern Sociological Society Annual Conference, Richmond, VA, April 2008.

S. McClure. "Rewriting race and asking for empathy: Using Katrina to assess teaching effectiveness in a required course." Paper presented at the Southern Sociological Society Annual Conference, New Orleans, LA, March 2006.

Selected Invited Lectures

- "Authentic and Effective Leadership for Social Justice," University of Missouri Honors College, October 6, 2016 (speaker)
- "Creating Inclusive Communities: Critical Self-Awareness for Empathetic Engagement," Workshop, University of Missouri School of Health Professions, February 26, 2016 (presenter)
- 5th Annual Diversity Summit, Augusta University, September 9, 2015 (panelist, "The Struggle for Social and Civic Equity")
- Graduate and Doctoral Hooding Ceremony, Tift College of Education, Mercer University, May 16, 2015 (Keynote Speaker)
- Ferguson, MO Teach-In – Interdisciplinary presentations, Georgia College, August 21, 2014 (organizer and presenter)

Selected Service/Activities

- Georgia College Student Research Committee, Spring 2009-Spring 2013 (member, co-chair Fall 2010)
- Invited guest, local public radio show on "Charter Schools in Georgia", April 2012
- SACS *Fifth-year interim report academic compliance certification subcommittee*, Spring 2009 (member)
- Faculty Development Workshop on Assessment – Program assessment and evaluation, February 22, 2008 (presenter)
- USG Faculty Development Seminar to Spain and Morocco, May 2008 (participant)
- "Know Justice, Know Peace" Moore's Ford Memorial Committee panel, Georgia College, April 3, 2007 (coordinator and facilitator)

Teaching Narrative – S.M. McClure

In my teaching I am always focused on encouraging the development of the sociological perspective, helping students look beyond accepted definitions of any given situation to see bigger issues and patterns. I try to teach in such a way that my love for my discipline comes through and is infectious. In addition in all classes I strive to create a community characterized by hooks's six pillars: care, responsibility, respect, trust, knowledge, and commitment (hooks 1994). I encourage constructive conflict and divergent positions through engagement with the key frameworks of my discipline and by asking students to apply course material to real world examples, all of which lead to student reflection, meaningful change, and individual development. In Fall 2019 I was honored to receive the Doctoral Scholars Faculty Mentor of the Year Award from the Southern Regional Education Board, an award I was nominated for by a former Georgia College student who I first taught when she was a dual enrollment student in my introductory sociology class.

I work to be very clear on the goals and expectations I have for all classes and use these to guide my instruction and assessment strategies. As an early-career professor I participated in several workshops that honed my capacity to begin designing any class with the question of what I want students to know and be able to do upon completion of the class. This informs course design across my teaching and in my collaborative work with my faculty colleagues in the undergraduate sociology program. In addition to regular assessment through conventional methods, I also ask students to complete reflections on their learning, including what materials they would share with others, what they would add, and what assignments were most helpful to them. These reflections, along with other data, continually inform my course design and approach to teaching.

It is also important to me to be available to students outside the classroom, both on and off campus. Time spent with students outside of the classroom is often some of the most transformative and significant time students have with their professors and it is one of the reasons I love working at Georgia College. For me this happens in many ways, including through participation in community-based projects, study abroad programs, and regular participation in non-classroom campus conversations and activities, including Teach-Ins, training programs for University Housing, the Diversity Peer Educators, and regular participation in Times Talk (both as a facilitator myself and through encouraging my students to facilitate as part of a course).

In the last several years, much of my emphasis has been on mentoring undergraduate students in their research. This includes several former students in graduate programs whose undergraduate research was key for their admission to and success in graduate school. In April 2019, I presented research with several undergraduate students at a regional sociology conference. The three projects we presented were the result of a capstone course on college student access and success; we collected data in Spring 2019 on questions related to first generation students and financial aid literacy, college admissions and campus diversity, and access and success in the summer Bridge program and the Early College program. I was personally interested in each of these questions. However, the process by which we arrived at them was based on collaboration and discovery with the students over the course of the Fall semester. In April 2020, I will again be presenting with several current undergraduate students at that same conference, on topics related to college access and success. I am nervous and excited about the results of these new projects but I have already seen the incredible value of this work in the changes it has wrought in the engagement, passion, curiosity, and skill-development of each of the participating students.

In all of my classes, assessment is designed to ask students to apply theoretical frameworks and concepts to real-world data and questions. This makes the knowledge more meaningful, transferable, and is the purpose of undergraduate education in the social sciences. In my introductory course, students analyze *New York Times* articles in weekly assignments and assessments. In my racial stratification course, students apply course theories to data on educational attainment by race. I incorporate an extensive field-based data collection project in my upper-level social stratification course. The final product of this project, as well as the final exam in the course (which asks students to apply course concepts to interactive data on unemployment rates by race, gender, age, and education level) have been used successfully by recent graduates in their applications to graduate programs. I recently taught a GC1Y course on the problem of racial segregation where students complete a collaborative research project on a proposed Sundown Town. With the help of Dr. Walker in the library, this included extensive use of historical data and archival material and is a very challenging project. Students find it quite difficult but are also able to see how these skills will be useful to them beyond the classroom.

Transferable knowledge is particularly relevant to my teaching on race, the micro and macro-level processes that facilitate and perpetuate systems of racial inequality, and the paradigms that have governed collective ideas about what race is and how it operates. I approach my teaching from a critical pedagogical perspective. As Omi and Winant write, “No one—no matter what their racial identity is—can be free of racism in their heads or hearts; it is too deeply ingrained a social structure. Yet a great deal of thought and action has been devoted to the problem of fostering anti-racist practice at the individual and experiential level. **Developing these skills, fostering the interruption and interrogation of racism, and extending the reach of anti-racism in family, school, and cultural life constitute an important dimension of practice we want to support**” (Omi & Winant 2012, 326). In fact, my most significant scholarly work in the past few years has been focused on extending my approach to teaching about race beyond my own classroom. In collaboration with my co-editor, Dr. Cherise Harris, I published, “[Getting Real About Race](#)” (SAGE 2014/2e 2018). This collection of essays and supplementary materials helps other instructors create similar classroom environments and is in its second edition. This semester, Cherise and I continue to work on a new reader, “Getting Real About Inequality: Intersections IRL (in real life)” again for SAGE that follows the same model and extends the topics to include a range of questions across intersecting inequalities, including race, class, gender, sexuality, gender identity, and religion. We hope it will be as useful to instructors across the country as has been true for the original work, which will go into third edition in the next two years.

This work is difficult, exhausting, intimate, and essential. I am committed to doing it well and to extending my teaching beyond the boundaries of the traditional classroom. It is an honor to do it with great students and colleagues at Georgia College.

hooks, bell. 1994. *Teaching to Transgress: Education as the Practice of Freedom*. New York: Routledge.

Winant, Michael and Howard Winant. 2012. “Racial Formation Rules: Continuity, Instability, and Change.” Pp. 302-331 in *Racial Formation in the Twenty-First Century* edited by Daniel M. HoSang, Oneka LaBennett, & Laura Pulido. Los Angeles: University of California Press.

I'd like to share just a few examples of my approach to teaching and learning, in addition to those discussed in my teaching philosophy.

The Georgia College Peer Educators initiative was started by Dr. Veronica Womack, in her position as head of the Office of Inclusive Excellence. Dr. Womack shared that she approached me about leading the initiative because my name constantly came up whenever she asked students who, on campus, was doing a good job at leading classroom discussions about social justice. Working with her, and in close collaboration with Deaje Taylor (supervisor of the Diversity Peer Educators student team) we solicited additional student nominations of other faculty and staff. Working with the group and in deep collaboration with the Diversity Peer Educators, we have developed two workshops that we made available to the campus community, one on facilitating difficult discussions, and one on inclusive syllabus policies. So far, we have only offered the "difficult discussions" workshop twice, but have offerings schedule for a third of that one and the first offering of the syllabus workshop for later this semester. On Monday, February 24th, I served as GCPE facilitator with a group of four DPE's, to offer the workshop to the Department of History and Geography. We got excellent feedback from the group, and Dr. McKinnon said in an email, "We all really appreciate your leadership on this vital part of our relationship with the campus community and we are looking forward to carrying on the conversation." I am so proud of this work, especially the incredible contributions of the students. They did/do an incredible job and it is so meaningful to me to participate in it with them, to make our campus better.

In addition to my work with undergraduate research (discussed in the teaching philosophy), I have a long tradition of participation in our on-campus Times Talk program. Over the years, I have been a regular facilitator, and am often asked to facilitate discussions on particularly difficult issues or topics related to questions of race and inequality. I don't ever find those easy. I'm not sure I ever feel that I meet the challenge of speaking to these incidents with the level of conviction they deserve. However, I learned from my excellent colleague Jan Hoffman, the one of the secrets of success in that regard is to "trust the room;" that is a skill I continue to use in Times Talk and in my classroom. I do believe that these on-campus, out-of-class conversations are an essential part of a genuinely transformative education. Beyond my own facilitation, which I see as an extension of my teaching role, I also regularly provide the opportunity for facilitation to students in my classes, as part of their course requirements. Just this semester, students in my Senior Seminar class have or will lead three different Times Talk sessions. I work closely with the students to prepare them for their facilitation and the students have done an amazing job. Last week, one student facilitated an incredible discussion about her capstone project in Paraguay and her mom was able to attend. This was a pretty cool teaching moment.

This semester I will repeat a project that I have done several times before. This project is a collaboration with a local high school social studies teacher and involves allowing that teacher's students to pose any question they would like related to race and racial inequality to my students. I collect the questions, sort, code, and translate them into a set of essay questions for students in my SOCI 3444 Theories of Racial Stratification class, which they will then have the option to respond to as an alternative to their regular midterm exam (which is an essay applying the theories to contemporary educational data). This semester, I had not yet reached out to the teacher I worked with last year and he emailed to ask if we could do it again. In addition to sharing the student essays with his students, last year we arranged for a classroom visit for myself and several of my students, for further discussion. It is a very cool collaboration, gets us off campus and into our community. And, as another colleague taught me, students write best when they write for an audience that is meaningful to them. That is so true. It took me some time to learn it, I am embarrassed to admit, but I am so glad I did.

Student Evaluation of Teaching Responses for all evaluated courses - S. McClure*

Spring 2019

Course	Excellent Teacher (Raw/Adjusted)	Excellent Course (Raw/Adjusted)	Average of B&C (Raw/Adjusted)
SOCI 1121	4.8/4.6	4.6/4.4	4.7/4.5
SOCI 3444	4.9/4.5	4.9/4.2	4.9/4.4
SOCI 3450	5/4.5	5.0/4.0	5.0/4.3
SOCI 4920	4.9/4.5	4.4/3.6	4.7/4.1

Fall 2018

Course	Excellent Teacher (Raw/Adjusted)	Excellent Course (Raw/Adjusted)	Average of B&C (Raw/Adjusted)
SOCI 1121	4.4/4.1	4.5/4.1	4.5/4.1
SOCI 1121	4.7/4.4	4.6/4.0	4.7/4.2
SOCI 3446	4.8/4.4	4.6/3.7	4.7/4.1
SOCI 4950	3.2/3.1	3.0/2.9	3.1/3.0

Spring 2018

Course	Excellent Teacher (Raw/Adjusted)	Excellent Course (Raw/Adjusted)	Average of B&C (Raw/Adjusted)
SOCI 1121	4.6/4.5	4.3/4.2	4.5/4.4
SOCI 1121	4.4/4.4	4.2/4.1	4.3/4.3
SOCI 3444	4.9/4.7	4.8/4.6	4.9/4.7
SOCI 3450	4.9/4.9	4.4/4.6	4.7/4.8

Fall 2017

Course	Excellent Teacher (Raw/Adjusted)	Excellent Course (Raw/Adjusted)	Average of B&C (Raw/Adjusted)
GC1Y 1000	4.0/4.1	3.7/3.8	3.9/3.9
SOCI 1121	4.5/4.5	4.3/4.3	4.4/4.4
SOCI 1121	4.7/4.7	4.7/4.7	4.7/4.7
SOCI 3446	4.7/4.6	4.4/4.3	4.6/4.4

*Fall 2019 not yet available as of 1/7/2020

To Whom it May Concern,

I have never been more eager to write a letter of recommendation than I am for Dr. Stephanie McClure. I attended Georgia College from 2013 to 2016, and there was no other faculty as impactful on my college experience as her. Her classes were easily the most fun and definitely the most challenging. Her classes frequently had me up late at night completing readings and up very early in the morning on registration days just to ensure a space in her course.

Dr. McClure's courses were not easy A's; they were not classes where you could show up and figure it out. They required hours of preparation with readings, collaboration and conversation with peers, and most of all, the willingness to separate yourself from the mindset where you feel comfortable. Diving into sociological concepts like race, class, and gender can lead to high tensions in a classroom, but Dr. McClure's translation of primary sources and applications of historical context were a skilled way of requiring us to learn and understand big concepts without getting wrapped up in talking-head debates.

Dr. McClure's teaching style prepared me for graduate school in ways that no other classes did, but I don't just owe her that. Without Dr. McClure, I can confidently ascertain that I would not be where I am now.

When I first met Dr. McClure, I was still a special education major. I had completed my very first day of student teaching and knew it was not for me. Erin Weston walked me into Arts and Sciences, to Dr. McClure's office, and right into the care and support of a professor who seemed to immediately understand what I was hoping to find at Georgia College. I was looking to be challenged, to learn about the world, and I was trying to find people who cared about inequalities and injustices the way I did. I changed my major to sociology that day and never looked back.

The best thing and the scariest thing about Dr. McClure is her expectations. Senior year, Dr. McClure oversaw my senior capstone and worked with me on research project about the same topic. She had so much confidence in my ability, that even when I felt I was in way over my head, and had no idea what I was doing, I would take a step back and remember, "If Dr. McClure thinks I can do this, then I can do this." Her trust that I was capable of doing things that were difficult and different is exactly what I needed to develop that same trust in myself.

It's four years later now, and I work in Student Affairs at the University of Pittsburgh. I went to graduate school for Higher Education Administration, but I utilize the primary sources and theories provided to me in Dr. McClure's classes an almost unbelievable amount for someone who is not a sociology instructor. When I'm not lecturing unsuspecting students about social stratification, I try to pour the energy and dedication in them that Dr. McClure gifted me. I do hope that I can make at least one student feel like I am as confident in their capabilities and eventual success as Dr. McClure made me feel.

I can absolutely say that Dr. McClure is deserving of the Teaching Excellence Award. Her dedication to her students and the subject matter is unmatched at Georgia College. It's a privilege to know her, and our institution is lucky to have her.

Sincerely,

Diana Bacallao

Georgia College Class of 2016



USC University of
Southern California

February 25, 2020

Dear Selection Committee,

Without any doubt or hesitation, I can easily say that Dr. Stephanie McClure has been one of the most important influences in my educational journey thus far. I first met Dr. McClure close to ten years ago when I was a sophomore at Georgia College. I initially enrolled in her honors level course on America's Diverse Cultural Heritage, anticipating that I would learn a few new concepts and become a more well-rounded liberal arts student. However, there was no way of knowing that taking this class with Dr. McClure would prove to be one of the most consequential decisions of my life.

From our very first class together, Dr. McClure's enthusiasm and passion were absolutely inspiring. She possessed a sheer brilliance that resonated throughout the room and elevated the class discussions well beyond what might have been expected in a freshman or sophomore level course. Through the masterful integration of multiple forms of media, rigorous course readings, and rich classroom discussions and assignments, Dr. McClure prepared our class to critically engage with challenging content and deepened our understanding of ourselves, our communities, and the complex practices, policies, and histories that continue to shape our world today. After such an extraordinary experience, I decided to declare a second major in sociology.

I strongly believe that one of the hallmarks of an excellent teacher is the ability to see strengths in your students that they are often unable to see for themselves just yet. Due to Dr. McClure's tireless guidance and mentorship, I began to see myself as an emerging scholar with thoughts, ideas, and dreams worthy of exploration. Throughout the next two years, I embarked on a journey with Dr. McClure that ultimately led to my first research presentation at an academic conference. This experience sparked an intellectual curiosity that has been integral to my professional success thus far.

It is important to note that Dr. McClure's excellence in teaching is not limited to the formal classroom setting. Even after I graduated from Georgia College, Dr. McClure and I remained close as I transitioned into a role as an admissions officer for the university. Although I was no longer officially one of her students, I continued to learn from her through meaningful intellectual collaborations that ultimately resulted in two academic publications. At the time, I did not realize just how important these learning opportunities would be for my future career, but somehow Dr. McClure did.

Several years later, as I began to contemplate returning to graduate school in pursuit of my PhD, Dr. McClure remained one of my greatest champions. It had been more than five years since I'd taken one of her classes, but she enthusiastically supported me throughout the PhD application



USC University of Southern California

process, celebrating my acceptances and counseling me through my rejections. With her support and guidance, I was able to make my dreams a reality. This past fall, I became a PhD student at the University of Southern California's Rossier School of Education, home to one of the nation's most prestigious doctoral programs for education research.

Although I've written about the many ways that Dr. McClure has been an impeccable educator, research advisor, and mentor, I would be remiss if I didn't share one final reason why she deserves this award. At my core, I believe that excellent teaching is an inherently revolutionary and radical act that manifests in a multitude of ways. It shows up when teachers instill in their students a sense of pride and passion for knowledge. It shows up when teachers are shining examples of courage and tenacity in the face of misguided opposition. Although Dr. McClure possesses all of these traits, her excellence in teaching also shows up through an unwavering level of care and compassion for her students both inside and outside of the classroom.

I experienced this firsthand in April of 2019, when my grandmother suddenly passed away. As my family began to plan her funeral, I quickly realized that I had a conflict. I was scheduled to present the findings of a new research project at an academic conference that same week with Dr. McClure and another student. I informed Dr. McClure that I wouldn't be able to attend the conference and began to prepare for what was sure to be one of the hardest days of my life. On the day of the funeral, I looked up at the line of mourners gathering in the church and saw Dr. McClure walking toward me. Like a true superstar, she'd presented at the conference that morning and somehow made it across the state in time to also be there to support me. Along with all of the attributes outlined in this letter, her unmatched level of dedication and love for her students make her an excellent candidate for this award.

As I reflect on my academic journey, I know that I would not be where I am or who I am today if I had not had Dr. Stephanie McClure as my teacher. She is and always will be one of my greatest inspirations and remains an outstanding example of the kind of professor I hope to become one day. Without a doubt, she will continue to inspire other students at Georgia College and beyond for years to come.

That's simply who she is.

Sincerely,

James Bridgeforth, MEd
Research Associate, USC Race and Equity Center
PhD Student, Urban Education Policy

To whom it may concern:

I am writing on behalf of Dr. Stephanie McClure to be recognized for her excellence in teaching. I graduated from GCSU in 2016 as a valedictorian double major in Literature and Sociology, and I would like to outline a few of my experiences learning from Dr. McClure and how her work as a mentor, scholar, and community member shaped who I am today.

Currently, I am a Ph.D. student in the Sociology Department at the University of Washington, and a portion of my day revolves around erudite talks about Theory. Personally, I have never been a fan of these abstractions that ivory-tower scholarship can produce, and it is difficult for me as a teacher to lead students through such discussions. I recall my first positive, comfortable talk of this kind was in Dr. McClure's office while she was interim chair of the Government and Sociology at GC. In class, we discussed almost passingly the way Modernism affects researcher views of data and understanding society, but I had leftover questions about the mention. The next day I dropped by her office hours after having consumed a reader on Modernism the night before ready to lecture about how Modernism in Sociology does not conform with the idea as it is used in Literature, which to me now, as a Teaching Assistant is what I consider a worst-case scenario: A student skims one book on a polyvalent concept and unannounced asks the instructor to field complex questions that may or may not be of the half-baked variety. However, Dr. McClure took my energy and questionnaire of sorts in stride. Guiding the conversation back to course concepts and expanding my thinking to what value paradigms can have on reproducing, and more importantly, disrupting inequality. I strive to incorporate this sort of compassion in my own teaching and mentoring now because McClure demonstrated how the excitement of a student can be directed toward meaningful learning.

The other portion of my day as a graduate student is spent crunching numbers. I attend a university that is known for being highly computational, and even in social science classrooms, computer science pervades. When people say "big data" they are referring to what I do. And, there is a tendency when dealing with big data for researchers to avoid internalizing their findings, which is to say, they might interpret their results effectively, but the personal emotional response is kept to a minimum because it can be difficult to wrap around what such large-scale results mean to the researcher. For example, my Master's Thesis is about unfair labor practice, and I have analyzed about a half million cases for the last twenty years using novel methods in our field and I find that unfair labor practice is far less likely to end favorably for people in right-to-work states, people who cannot afford lawyers, and people who are not getting support from their coworkers. It is easy to simply report this finding and pass it off to the ether of academic journals hoping that it will catch policy makers' attention or worse, simply develop my clout in the discipline. However, I kept going back to the advice Dr. McClure gave me throughout my senior project and other research I performed at GC. She would say in an exacting tone: "Why should people care?" then, "What are you going to do about it?" because she encourages research that convinces and moves. I am able to fight the tendency to remain distant from my big data at a personal cost because Dr. McClure instilled in me the confidence to know that my research can mean better outcomes for people in the future, and that I can

handle the burden. That's why, rather than presenting this research for my discipline's annual conference where praise for methods may come, I am presenting at the Labor Research Action Network's annual conference instead, because I can answer the "What are you going to do about it?" question by showing this research to the folks who care and can make the work part of a foundation for change. In short, Dr. McClure's critical style informs my research on a daily basis, and empowers me to make research that convinces and moves.

It is clear Dr. McClure has impacted my life in line-items on my CV. McClure once asked me to write an essay that would go on to win an award, she offered to have me help revise some papers that became part of her textbook, she saw the best in the research I wanted to conduct, and on and on these items are built on her encouragement. And if one had a keen eye, and knew Dr. McClure, they might see these traces as well. However, what I want to highlight is that citations provide a simplistic view of how Dr. McClure has influenced me. I witnessed McClure lined up on panels fielding questions of praxis from aggrieved students when Capital City Night Club was outed as having racially discriminatory practices at the door, how she responded to students who came to her office teary eyed over anything else than course content, or how in her Racial Stratification course she invokes the history of Milledgeville and the travesty of how "The Pit" used to be a public pool but was filled in to alleviate white folks of having to tarry with desegregation. These moments showed me not just what a teacher is, but what care looks like. McClure cares. As a beneficiary of that care, it is my duty to carry on the work. I strive to be compassionate with my students, see the best in them and ask that they hold up the bargain and be their best in my course. I try to challenge them with readings that may be dense, and when they complain I frequently quote McClure "I won't let you off the hook." I tell my students: "It's okay to feel your feelings, but you have got to use that feeling for something productive." If I had no students, no research or academic pursuits, these principles of compassion, optimism, and care would still guide my endeavors.

Dr. Stephanie McClure has been a significant figure in my life for what she has done for me as a mentor, scholar and caring person. I feel like I owe her appreciation that I cannot quantify and so I will instead use that feeling to be productive.

Sincerely,
Breon Haskett

To Whom It May Concern:

I attended Georgia College from 2012 to 2016. My first exposure to sociology was the sociological perspectives class that I took my sophomore year; this class was taught by another professor, but I was very intrigued by the subject. I spoke with a few friends who took sociology courses, and they all told me that taking a course with Dr. McClure was a must. Little did I know how much a course with her would change my entire trajectory at Georgia College.

One of my favorite aspects of Georgia College was how small and intimate the classes felt, and this meant that I was able to observe my professors outside of the classroom. I saw how Dr. McClure stood in her convictions both inside and outside of the classroom; I watched her passionately teach social stratification in class and use that same passion to argue for accountability in our community.

Dr. McClure's classes were challenging and showing up unprepared was not an option. While the topics we discussed were usually very heavy, such as race, gender, and class, they also forced us to become better thinkers. I can say, without a doubt, that Dr. McClure made me a better student. She taught me how to apply theory, thoroughly analyze data, and consider different perspectives. Without Dr. McClure, I would not be the person that I am today.

I graduated in 2016 with a degree in political science and sociology, and I am currently pursuing a Master of Public Administration. There are so many concepts from her class that have applied to my career in nonprofits as well as my graduate coursework. I am forever grateful to have met Dr. McClure and have the privilege to have been taught by her. Dr. McClure is extremely deserving of the Teaching Excellence Award, and Georgia College, its students, and its community are very lucky to have her.

Sincerely,

Nana K. Opoku-Agyemang

To Whom it May Concern:

I cannot express how deserving Dr. Stephanie McClure is of the Teaching Excellence Award. I have been eagerly awaiting for the moment I was presented with the opportunity to support Dr. McClure's nomination for an award as such for 5 years now.

As I continue in my first year of the Student Affairs in Higher Education M.S. program at Miami University- Ohio, I am reminded everyday of the success that Dr. McClure fostered inside of the classroom for all of her students. It was because of Dr. McClure's passion for teaching and sociology that I learned to love learning and therefore felt confident enough to pursue another degree. As I continue to discuss education inequality in higher education and identity development among peers, I see in myself the product of a student who gained so much from a classroom that challenged traditional thinking through theory, provided me with research opportunities and experiences, and truly made me reflect on who I am and how I show up in a space. This is something that has given me a heavy advantage among my peers and helped me to succeed at the rate faster than I thought I was capable of.

What separates Dr. McClure from other professors is the intentionality behind her work. I remember the first class I took with Dr. McClure was an introduction to sociology class my first semester of my freshman year. I was devastated that I was not doing well in this introductory class because sociology was the major that I had declared and yet I was close to failing even though I loved the material we were studying. After Dr. McClure had the opportunity to get to know me and how I learned best, she presented me with an alternative exam option. Rather than the standard multiple-choice exam that the class was regularly given, Dr. McClure presented me with an essay option. Not having anything to lose, I blindly accepted this opportunity and miraculously improved my exams scores and gained confidence who I was as a college student. This was the first interaction I have ever had with a teacher or professor of any kind who was invested in my learning and assessment and was flexible enough to adapt to a student in their class. In the following semester, I was placed in a 3000-level sociology class- History and Contemporary Social Thought. As a freshman, I did not feel as though I was ready to sit among juniors and seniors in a class that was so theory heavy. After the first class, I stayed late to talk to Dr. McClure. As I got emotional about the discomfort of handling a 3000-level course after being advised to drop it, Dr. McClure assured me that she would provide any and all resources and support in order for me to succeed. Though I was the only first year student in that class, she did not hesitate to welcome me into the space with open arms and acknowledged that I was not at the same place as the other students academically, yet I was fully capable of the same successes.

In addition to the experiences I have detailed in this letter of support, the impact that Dr. McClure has on her students is inexplicable. Dr. McClure's willingness and kindness has helped so many students find value in themselves and their work. Dr. McClure is the reason that I am proud to be a Georgia College alum. When I think about the love for my undergraduate degree and the desire to pursue that knowledge in my current work, I think of Dr. McClure. She is genuinely one of the most inspirational individuals in my life due to her dedication in and outside of the classroom. Dr. McClure embodies social justice values everywhere she goes. Whether it is on Georgia College's campus or in the greater Milledgeville community, Dr. McClure practices what she preaches and serves as a role model for countless individuals.

Sincerely,

Anika Patel

Georgia College Class of 2017

To the Teaching Excellence Award Committee:

Dr. Stephanie McClure has been my mentor, advisor, advocate, academic mom, and friend for many years, and I believe she will be all of these things throughout my lifetime. I began my college career at 17, timid and unsure of my abilities. Dr. McClure saw through my quiet demeanor, recognized my passion for racial and educational equity and justice, and encouraged me to become the scholar, activist, and researcher I pride myself on being today.

While many professors can identify “good students” through their coursework, Dr. McClure goes well beyond identifying such students. To Dr. McClure every student is a whole person, or, as she says, “everybody is someone’s precious baby.” She actively works to encourage each student to dream big and follow through on those dreams. She does this by sharing her life, her family, and her home with her students. She does this by creating a classroom environment that is welcoming to all, while centering the needs and voices of the most marginalized. She does this by creating research and professional opportunities for every student, not just those with the cultural capital to seek those opportunities on their own. When Stephanie McClure says “ALL students deserve to feel safe, loved, and wanted,” she means it. She lives it. Her students benefit academically from her wealth of knowledge while in her courses, and, more importantly, we leave her classes forever changed by her passion for social justice and racial equity. Connecting academic knowledge with a passion to serve the social world in which we live is at the heart of Georgia College’s public liberal arts mission. Dr. McClure does justice to that mission in her own work and brings it alive for her students.

As my mentor, Dr. McClure has written countless letters of recommendation, sat on my thesis and dissertation committees, brought me onto multiple publications and book projects, pushed me to build my own datasets to answer questions about marginalized students that others are not asking, introduced me to her professional networks, and created independent study courses specifically for me and my interests. She has taught me what it means to be a mentor and an advocate, and I model my teaching philosophy and mentorship style on her example. She taught me that getting students to recite a data trend or summarize a theory is not evidence of truly imparting knowledge. The true test lies in students’ ability to apply knowledge outside of the classroom.

Dr. McClure and I recently co-authored a sociology encyclopedia entry on the life, work, and impact of Professor Derrick Bell, the celebrated legal scholar and one of the founders of Critical Race Theory. She was so moved by this quote from W.E.B. DuBois in Bell’s *Ethical Ambition* (2002): “The return from your work must be the satisfaction which that work brings you and the world’s need of that work. With this, life is heaven, or as near heaven as you can get” (p. 178). I have seen the joy in Dr. McClure’s eyes when her students succeed, I have seen her sorrow when they do not, and I have seen her work to create the best possible learning environment for all of her students. She is not motivated by individual glory or publishing for the sake of name recognition. She is dedicated to her students and the work of liberation, justice, and equity. She is as close to heaven as she can get and I am blessed to have been touched by her light.

Hersheda Patel, MA
Senior Data Manager, ProGeorgia
Sociology Doctoral Student, Georgia State University
SREB Doctoral Scholar