

Excellence in Teaching Award Packet for Dr. Christopher Clark

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Nomination Letter from Department Chair - Ken Farr

This letter is written in support of the nomination of Dr. Chris Clark for the 2017-18 Georgia College (GC) Excellence in Teaching Award. Dr. Clark has been a faculty member at GC since 2005 and, in my opinion, he has developed into one of the finest teaching professors on campus. He takes his faculty responsibilities very seriously and is constantly looking for ways to improve student outcomes. He frequently assesses his teaching performance and the performance of his students which provides him information from which to make appropriate adjustments, if needed, to his teaching methods. Students consistently rate him highly on formal student opinion evaluations even though he maintains a high level of rigor in his classes. He has also received several awards for his teaching and research since he arrived at GC.

He has become a leader in the department whom other faculty look to for guidance and wisdom on a plethora of issues. He mentors junior faculty and works hard to help them improve their teaching. He is heavily involved in economics curriculum development and adjustments. Over the years, he has created several new courses and has been a major contributor to adjustments to existing courses to help improve student learning outcomes. As an example, several years ago he recommended “pairing” the senior level Introductory Econometrics class, taught during the fall semester, with the Senior Seminar course, taught during the spring semester, so that students would have two semesters to complete their senior research projects. This has been a tremendous success and has led to significant number of quality student research papers produced by our undergraduate econ majors.

While Dr. Clark’s passion is teaching economics to students, he still maintains an active research agenda which includes ten published articles that largely focus on innovative economics pedagogy, two book chapters, research reports, and a large number of papers presented at professional academic meetings. He (and colleagues) have been the recipients of several grants totaling almost \$90,000 during his time at GC. He continues to maintain an active research agenda with several working papers currently under review. He is also active in professional organizations where he serves as a journal reviewer and paper discussant.

I believe that Dr. Clark’s hard work and dedication to his students makes him most qualified and extremely deserving of this award. I wholeheartedly recommend him for the honor of winning this year’s Georgia College Excellence in Teaching Award. Please don’t hesitate to contact me if additional information is needed to support his nomination.

Respectfully Submitted,

W. Ken Farr

W. Ken Farr

Department of Economics and Finance

March 1, 2018
Letter of Nomination
Georgia College Faculty Excellence Awards

As College of Business Dean I endorse Dr. Christopher Clark for the university's *Excellence in Teaching Award*. Chris is a professor in the Department of Economics and Finance.

Chris teaches Economics, a discipline area many Georgia College (GC) students find challenging. He also supports delivery of the university's core curriculum by contributing to the development of several GC1Y courses, including "Freakonomics," and regularly teaching GC1Y sections. He has helped guide curriculum revisions in Economics that are having far-reaching impacts, such as contributing to the increase in student-faculty research in the major, student success in academic meetings, and acceptance of our Economics students into various graduate programs.

The consistently supportive remarks on the teaching evaluations of Dr. Clark are one evidence of the quality of his teaching. Student performance in developing research projects and succeeding in graduate school are another. He receives strong teaching evaluations while at the same time delivering courses that are academically challenging. The support letters from former students included in this package, from those currently in or who have completed PhD programs at Clemson, Georgia Tech, and Florida State, are further evidence of the lasting impact Chris is having on GC students. His teaching and personal involvement with our students is contributing to the next generation of scholar-teachers.

Dr. Clark's commitment to high-quality teaching is supported by his often-cited research. Chris is very active in producing academic studies that are related to pedagogical advancements, with recent articles appearing in *Perspectives on Economic Education Research* and the *Journal of Economics and Finance Education*. This research is conducted and co-authored with other faculty members from the GC Economics department, which I believe provides evidence of his collaborative nature. An earlier and very timely stream of research, using publically-available performance data of Georgia high school students, examined end-of-course testing, grade disparities in ninth and eleventh-grade classes, and use of AP courses. He is active in presenting his research at various academic meetings. His teaching and research strongly complement one another, to the benefit of our students and the quality of GC academic programs.

Based on this brief summary of his accomplishments, I endorse without reservation Dr. Chris Clark for the university's *Excellence in Teaching Award*.

Sincerely,



Dale Young, Ph.D.

Dean, J. Whitney Bunting College of Business
Milledgeville • Macon • Warner Robins

Established in 1889

Georgia's designated public liberal arts university since 1996

Letter of Support from Colleague (and Past Student) - Dr. Brent Evans

It is my honor to recommend Chris Clark for the Georgia College Excellence in Teaching Award. Chris is an extraordinary teacher, which is clearly evidenced by student evaluations, student outcomes, and his commitment to pedagogical research. I cannot imagine a more deserving candidate than Chris, whose attitude and efforts towards student learning is inspiring to students and faculty alike.

I am in a unique position to evaluate Chris's teaching methods and outcomes. As a 2008 economics graduate of Georgia College, I was afforded the chance to take two of his classes. The first of these classes, Intermediate Microeconomics, was the single most important class that I ever took. It was in this masterfully-taught class that I decided that a career as economics professor was my life's ambition. I would like to say that it was the subject matter that drew me towards a career in economics, but, in hindsight I think it was Chris's teaching abilities that made the class so memorable. Chris's lectures are mesmerizing. He has a linguistic ability that makes difficult content sound conversational. As a professor, I have tried to emulate his style, with some success. However, it is difficult, if not impossible to teach at his level. Chris isn't just talented, he is also extremely dedicated to developing his craft. While those with gifts are often able to simply "coast", Chris has chosen to maximize his teaching ability through consistent effort. Chris is always prepared, never slow to grade assignments, and seems to welcome anyone who asks for help. This makes Chris a great teacher and a tremendous colleague. Rarely does a week go by that I don't ask for advice or help, and Chris is always more than willing to give me thoughtful guidance and support. From the constant barrage of students that visit Chris's office, it is clear that I am not the only one to value his advice and encouragement.

My feelings towards Chris are shared by former and current students as evidenced by his teaching evaluations. After asking Chris if I could write a letter of support for this award, I suggested that he send me his class evaluations from the spring. As was the case when I was a student, current pupils routinely rate Chris as an "excellent teacher" and state that his classes are highly strenuous. As any educator would attest, it is difficult to receive uniformly strong student evaluations, while also teaching extremely difficult courses. Chris's reputation is that of a tremendously good teacher whose classes are also very difficult. In a time when grade inflation seems to be the norm in higher education, Chris has managed to draw student admiration while maintaining rigor. This not only improves the quality of his own classes, but also sets a standard for other economics courses, increasing the quality of the entire economics curriculum.

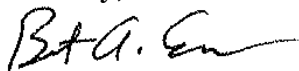
Student evaluations are one thing... student learning outcomes are most important. Indeed, student learning outcomes in the economics program have been stellar. This is evidenced in part by a high degree of grad school placement. Since Chris became a member of the economics faculty, at least one student has placed into an economics Ph.D. program at a highly-competitive university each year. After entering grad school, these students have been extremely successful. In a field where most students fail to finish with a terminal degree, the vast majority of GCSU economic students earn a Ph.D. within the typical five year period. This is further evidenced by

student accolades. Since Chris's arrival, GCSU economics students have won (or shared in the case of a tie) the best undergraduate paper award at the Academy of Economics and Finance Annual Conference (a well-established, national conference) each of the last four years. This is made possible, in part, due to an innovative scheduling technique devised by Chris, in which students take econometrics during the fall semester of their senior year, followed by a senior seminar course. Between these two courses, students develop a paper that will serve as their capstone project. These papers are often on par with peer reviewed publications in competitive journals, and indeed, several of these papers have eventually been published in top tier journals. Furthermore, two of these senior papers have won the Frank W. Taussig Award, which is an international distinction given annually to the best undergraduate economics paper by Omicron Delta Epsilon, the leading international honor society in economics. To be clear... there is only one winner internationally per year, and GCSU has had two winners of the award since Chris has arrived at the university. This is a tremendous accomplishment.

In addition to his classroom accolades, Chris has developed a series of pedagogical papers that demonstrate his dedication to economic education and student advancement. Chris has six education papers in high-impact economics journals, many of which are pedagogical in nature. Perhaps the most novel of these papers is his work, "Swansonomics: Using Parks and Recreation to Teach Economics," which was coauthored with GCSU economics professor, Brooke Conaway. This articles explores a unique lesson plan, which utilizes content from the NBC television show, Parks and Recreation, to introduce complex economics ideas. This article has been read more than 1,400 times on Researchgate.net (a website used to disseminate research) making it one of the most frequently read papers from Georgia College. Chris continues to create pedagogical work and most recently received notice of a "revise and resubmit" from the Journal of Economic Education, the top field journal in economics pedagogical research.

Chris is an excellent teacher and has been a tremendous role model for me at Georgia College. I cannot think of anyone more deserving of a teaching award (at GCSU or otherwise). I hope that he is considered for the award and I know he would be a well-received commencement speaker if chosen. Please let me know if there is anything I could do to strengthen his case.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "B.A. Evans". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Dr. Brent A. Evans ('08)
Assistant Professor of Economics

Letter of Support from Colleague - Dr. Brooke Conaway

I am writing to extend my wholehearted support of Chris Clark's application for the Georgia College Excellence in Teaching Award. All of us had that one teacher who pushed us beyond what we thought ourselves capable of, and, in doing so, allowed us to see that we are capable of so much more. We all had that teacher who placed difficult challenges before us, yet taught us in a way that made meeting those challenges possible. We each remember that teacher for their rigorous classes, but also for their ability to help us learn to achieve the high standards they set for us.

Chris is this kind of teacher. According to both his colleagues and his students, his teaching excellence stems from his ability to maintain rigor in his courses while providing his students with the tools they need to fully realize their potential in actually learning very difficult material. After interacting with his students regularly, the same general response emerges: his classes are difficult, but his students feel they actually learned a lot because he's such an excellent and engaging teacher.

Outside of holding his students to a high standard, Chris has also been instrumental in new course development for our first-year students. He was a driving force behind the creation of three new GC1Y courses: Freakonomics; Sex, Drugs, and Economics; and Swansonomics. Chris has helped further the mission of Georgia College by developing interesting first-year courses where students are challenged to learn the critical thinking skills GC1Y courses are intended to teach. He has also shared the successes of these courses with the profession through collaborative pedagogical publications such as, "Swansonomics: Using Parks and Recreation to Teach Economics" and "The Economists Strike Back: Keeping Economics in the Core Curriculum."

He has also been an integral part in the development of a potential addition to the GC2Y course offerings. The course, Economics in Three Acts, will combine theater and script writing with learning basic economic concepts. Chris performed a trial run of this theater component in his Economics and Society courses last semester, and the students were very receptive to this innovative approach. The interdisciplinary nature of this course undoubtedly embodies the liberal arts mission of Georgia College.

In addition to these courses, Chris helped to advance the economics program so that our students learn contemporary and applicable econometric techniques through the production of high quality research projects. Formerly, our students learned econometric techniques in their Econometrics course, which they used in the Senior Capstone course to produce a research project over the course of a semester. Chris felt this method was not serving our students well, and instead collaborated with his colleagues to make successful changes. Now, instead of completing a research paper over the course of a semester, our students begin this project in the fall of their senior year during Chris' Econometrics course.

Students complete their research over the course of their entire senior year, and they are able to gain valuable application skills and additional experience in completing a high quality research paper. Our students are increasingly winning national and

international awards for their research, and landing prestigious jobs in data analysis because of these changes. In fact, two of our recent graduates are now working at think tanks in D.C. and are both using the empirical skills they learned in Chris's Econometrics class. Additionally, he coauthored a paper, "Integrating Econometrics: A Modern Undergraduate Capstone Experience," which details these program changes to help other economics departments who are looking to successfully implement similar modifications.

Chris has answered the call of the liberal arts mission by producing graduates that are used to being challenged and held to high standards, and that have an excellent broad-based education that fosters critical, independent, and creative thinking. Chris also makes a concerted effort to maintain contact with our graduates to help them continue to progress as they enter graduate school or full-time careers. He actually coordinated a "mock interview" for one of our former students who was finishing her PhD, which helped better prepare her for job market interviews as she completed her doctoral work. These high quality graduates make Georgia College a place of preeminence. The name "Georgia College" is progressively becoming well-known in places typically reserved for graduates from larger, more renowned universities. I believe Chris has been a highly influential part of this path, and, in my opinion, he deserves this award every year. Our students are far better prepared for meeting the challenges of the real world because of him, and his efforts ensure that he will be that teacher they always remember.

Sincerely,



Brooke Conaway
Assistant Professor of Economics

Condensed Curriculum Vitae

Education	Ph.D. Economics August 2005	University of Kentucky Lexington, KY
Academic Work Experience	Assistant Professor Georgia College & State University	Fall 2005 – Summer 2011
	Associate Professor Georgia College & State University	Fall 2011 – Summer 2016
	Professor Georgia College & State University	Fall 2016 – Current
	Courses: Freakonomics, Economics and Society, Principles of Microeconomics, Intermediate Microeconomics, Labor Economics, Managerial Economics, Economics for Managers, Public Economics: Taxation, Econometrics	
Pedagogical Publications	“The Economists Strike Back: Keeping Economics in the Core Curriculum” (with L. Brooke Conaway and JJ Arias) 2016 Perspectives on Economic Education Research 10:1, 71-93.	
	“Swansonomics: Using Parks and Recreation to Teach Economics,” (with Brooke Conaway) 2015 Journal of Economics and Finance Education 14:1, 41-68.	
Pedagogical Working Papers	“Integrating Econometrics: A Modern Undergraduate Economics Capstone Experience” (with Brooke Conaway, JJ Arias, and Jessie Folk) 2017 Revise and Resubmit from Journal of Economic Education.	
	“Economics in Three Acts” (with Brooke Conaway, Justin Roush, and Jessie Folk) 2017.	
Other Education Related Research	“Do Peers Influence Achievement in High School Economics? Evidence from Georgia’s Economics End of Course Test,” (with Ben Scafidi and John R. Swinton) 2011 Journal of Economic Education 42:1, 3-18.	
	“Does AP Economics Improve Student Achievement?” (with Ben Scafidi and John R. Swinton) 2012 The American Economist 57:1, 1-20.	
	“Who Takes Advanced Placement (AP)?” (with Ben Scafidi and John R. Swinton) 2015 Eastern Economic Journal 41, 346-369.	

“The Effects of Academic Rigor in High School on Academic Performance in College” for the Governor’s Office of Student Achievement (goo.gl/wDiYii)

“Grading Disparities in Georgia’s High School 9th Grade English Literature, 11th Grade English Literature, Biology, Physical Science, History, Geometry, and Economics Classes“ for the Governor’s Office of Student Achievement (goo.gl/Higi9G)

“Grading Disparities in Georgia’s High School Algebra Classes” for the Governor’s Office of Student Achievement (goo.gl/bybBv5)

“Do Teacher Credentials and Characteristics Impact Teacher Effectiveness in High School Economics?” (with John Swinton and Ben Scafidi) from the Council for Economic Education and the U.S. Department of Education Office of Innovation and Improvement

“Excellence in Economics Education Grant: Determinants of Student Success in Economics Education” (with John Swinton, Ben Scafidi, and Howard Woodard) from the National Council of Economic Education Excellence in Economic Education program

Excellence in Economic Education, National Council on Economic Education matching grant (with Georgia College & State University and Georgia Council on Economic Education): “Success in High School Economics as a Determinant of College Success.” (with John Swinton, Ben Scafidi, and Howard Woodard)

“Do Peers Matter? Evidence from the Sixth Grade Experiment” from the J. Whitney Bunting School of Business Faculty Summer Research Grant

Selected Presentations

“Economics in Three Acts” (with Brooke Conaway, Justin Roush, and Jessie Folk) GCSU COBRA, October 2017, Milledgeville, GA

"Swansonomics: Teaching Comparative Economic Systems to a New Audience in a New Way" (with Brooke Conaway) AEF annual meeting, February 2017, Charleston, SC

"Swansonomics: Teaching Comparative Economic Systems to a New Audience in a New Way" (with Brooke Conaway) SEA annual meeting, November 2016, Washington, DC

"Swansonomics: Teaching Comparative Economic Systems to a New Audience in a New Way" (with Brooke Conaway) SEA annual meeting, November 2014, Atlanta, GA

**Honors and
Awards**

Undergraduate Research Mentor Award
Georgia College & State University 2013

Students' Choice Award
Georgia College & State University 2012

Laurie Hendrickson McMillan Faculty Award
Georgia College & State University 2010

Phi Mu Carnation Professor Award
Georgia College & State University 2010

Zeta Tau Alpha Crown Professor Award
Georgia College & State University 2006

Reflective Statement

I strongly believe economic education is absolutely vital for young people to be successful. During my time at Georgia College I have taught over 3,000 students at various stages in their college careers. I push these students very hard in an effort to prepare them to achieve great things. I have received excellent teaching evaluations while maintaining considerable rigor in my classes. My grade distribution is A's 9%, B's 36%, C's 35%, D's 15%, and F's 5% and, as you can see from the table below, 97% of students rated me a 4 or 5 out of 5 for teaching effectiveness/excellence (the way the question was asked has changed over time.)

	5	4	3	2	1
In general, this instructor is an effective/excellent teacher.	60%	37%	3%	1%	0%

During the fall semester of 2011 I began teaching our Econometrics class. In an effort to improve student research skills, Ben Scafidi and I decided to require senior economics students to complete one legitimate research paper over the course of their two primary senior-level economics courses, Econometrics and Senior Seminar. These students were expected to ask an important question, convince us their question matters, gather their own data, construct their own model, and obtain their own results. These student would then present this research at a student research conference. The results of this effort have been very impressive. Since this curriculum change, four of our students have earned the outstanding student research paper award at the AEF annual meetings and many of our students have been accepted into impressive Ph.D. Economics programs, with one student receiving funding in excess of \$100,000. We even had a student receive the prestigious Frank W. Taussig award from Omicron Delta Epsilon, the international economics honor society.

When Georgia College revised its core in 2010 economics was removed as a required course for nonbusiness majors. Faced with this loss of enrollment and a significant source of recruitment, JJ Arias, Brooke Conaway, and I created three new freshmen level GC1Y critical thinking classes (Freakonomics, Swansonomics, and Sex, Drugs, and Economics) in an effort to gain back some of the ground we lost following the revision. These three classes have proven extremely popular and have been an excellent source of economics majors. We are also working on a new sophomore level GC2Y course we are calling Economics in Three Acts, that we hope will help students understand how economics is and can be applied through popular media.

During the fall semester of 2005 I developed a Labor Economics Special Topics course that I taught during the spring semester of 2006. The course has since become a permanent course we integrated into the public economics concentration, which I also helped create. I also assisted in the creation of two other economics concentrations, International Economics and Financial Economics. These concentrations are designed to help students focus on topics they are passionate about.

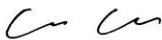
During the spring semester of 2006 I was awarded the “Crown Professor Award” by Zeta Tau Alpha as the faculty member in the College of Business that has made the largest impact on student lives. During the spring semester of 2010, I was awarded the “Carnation Professor Award” by the Phi Mu Fraternity based on my teaching. That spring I was also awarded the “Laurie Hendrickson McMillan Faculty Award” which is given annually to a non-tenured faculty member who has excelled in teaching, research, and community service. In 2012, I received the Students’ Choice Award, which is given annually to a professor from the College of Business that is selected by students. I was honored to receive (with Ben Scafidi) the Undergraduate Research Mentor Award in 2013 for our work with upper-level economics students.

I also strive to publish pedagogical work focused on improving teaching in the economics profession. In 2015 Brooke Conaway and I published the article “Swansonomics: Using Parks and Recreation to Teach Economics” in the Journal of Economics and Finance Education. According to Research Gate, that article has been read over 1,400 times, making it the most read paper published by any professor currently teaching at Georgia College. I have since published, with Brooke Conaway and JJ Arias, another pedagogical article entitled “The Economists Strike Back: Keeping Economics in the Core Curriculum” in the journal Perspectives on Economic Education Research.

Given the phenomenal response we’ve received to our published work and our passion for teaching, we’ve decided to continue to focus on research related to teaching. One such paper my colleagues and I wrote, “Integrating Econometrics: A Modern Undergraduate Economics Capstone Experience”, recently received a revise and resubmit for the Journal of Economic Education. We are also preparing another pedagogical paper entitled “Economics in Three Acts” for submission.

I would like to thank you very much for considering me for this award. I am thankful every day that I have the opportunity to teach at this incredible institution. The fantastic students and colleagues I interact with on a daily basis make me increasingly proud to be a member of the faculty. I am honored to have been nominated for the Excellence in Teaching Award.

Sincerely,



Chris Clark
Professor of Economics

Summary of Innovative Teaching Artifacts and Practices Used in the Classroom to Promote Student Success

I would like to present what I feel is a clear example of how I guide economics students toward the successful completion of their senior research project using three specific assignments. Students begin their project in my Econometrics class and work to improve and refine their work during our Senior Seminar course. The econometrics course serves two purposes. First, it introduces students to the techniques, tools, and approaches used in modern applied economics research. Second, it allows students to begin their senior project. They develop their own question, gather and clean their data, develop their programming skills, and perform their own analysis. Three assignments guide their progress: a topic memo, a data memo, and a results memo.

The first assignment students will complete in Econometrics is a topic proposal. They are expected to present their question, explain the basic model they will employ to answer the question, provide the data source they hope to use, and convince the econometrics and senior seminar professors their topic is interesting/important enough to warrant the student's attention. This memo is due early in the semester, typically during the first month, to emphasize to students the importance of their projects. I work very hard to avoid giving them a question. I find students do a relatively poor job when they are not personally invested in the topic, so I push them to develop their own questions, suggesting refinements when necessary. In my experience, students who feel personally invested in their project perform better and gain considerable confidence when sharing their findings with others.

The second assignment students will complete in Econometrics is a data summary. At this point students begin to become familiar with the statistical software most commonly used by Economists. It is also the point at which they learn the importance of critically evaluating the source and quality of data. These are skills economics graduates must have if they wish to be successful in graduate school and/or when they begin their career. I carefully walk students through the process of acquiring, cleaning, and verifying data, but they are expected to apply what they've learned to their own work.

The final assignment students complete in Econometrics is their results memo. They are presenting their first attempt at answering their question, so they know they will be expected to harshly evaluate their own work and present a game plan for future improvements. If their model suffers from any econometric issues, and they always do, I expect the student to explain how they will address them moving forward. I also expect the student to provide a correctly specified model and carefully explain their identification strategy.

Students are expected to take the three assignments they completed in my econometrics course and use those to synthesize a completed research paper and presentation during their senior seminar course. There are two points in the academic year that remind me why I focus so much of my energy and time into improving my teaching: 1) The look of pride and accomplishment I see in the eyes of my students when they are able to present their results. 2) The look of amazement I see in the eyes of my students' parents when they get to see their children present their work at the Georgia Student Research Conference. Those two moments are why I do what I do.

Letter of Support from Past Student – Leah Kitashima

I am writing on behalf of Dr. Christopher Clark for the Georgia College Excellence in Teaching Award.

My story about Dr. Clark begins in the spring semester of my freshman year.

I remember, as if it was yesterday, looking at my schedule and reading “Microeconomics” with a Dr. Christopher Clark. I did not know much about economics, and at the time I was not at all interested in knowing anything about economics. I had taken economics in high school and that was enough for me (or so I thought). I walked into that first class absolutely dreading it. I took out my notebook ready to be quite bored and quite unimpressed; and then the unforeseeable happened: Dr. Clark walked into the room and began his lecture. I found myself not only enjoying his class, but actually looking forward to going to the next class, along with my fellow colleagues. With each lecture he gave, the more engaged the entire class became. After a few classes, I decided to major in economics. Throughout my undergraduate career, I took multiple classes with Dr. Clark and there was not a single day that I ever wanted to skip his class.

I truly believe it takes a good teacher to make their students love the subject they teach, but it takes an amazing teacher to make their students love economics. Dr. Clark has an incredible talent of translating complex material into real-world examples so that each and every student can relate and understand. I now realize that this is not just a talent, but also his dedication to teaching and passion for his students to learn and love economics. On top of that, Dr. Clark has an amazing sense of humor which makes even the driest material interesting. The thing I admire most about Dr. Clark is that it did not matter if you were an A-student or a C-student, you always walked out of Dr. Clark’s class each time with a laugh, and feeling like you really learned something.

On top of Dr. Clark’s incredible ability to teach, he truly cares about his students and their success. Students never hesitated to drop by his office whether they had a question, to talk about their class schedule, or discuss what they may want to do in the future. Dr. Clark’s door was always open and he always made each student feel important. Around my junior year, I decided I wanted to go to graduate school. I did not know anything about graduate school and I knew I could go to Dr. Clark to ask any question. I will always remember Dr. Clark sitting me down as he looked up each school I was interested in, and looked up each professor at that school to determine my potential future dissertation advisor. He laid out my “to dos” for graduate school applications: when I needed to take the GRE, what score I should aim for, how to study, when to ask for letters of recommendation, when to apply to school, how to get a scholarship for graduate school, etc. I truly do not think I could have done that process without Dr. Clark’s advice. I also know I was not an exception, because Dr. Clark has done this and continues to do this for all of his students.

During my PhD studies at Clemson University, I often attended economic conferences where professors and students from across the United States would come to share their

research. At these conferences, I would attend Dr. Clark's sessions where Dr. Clark would lecture on effective and innovative methodologies for teaching economics to college students. Just like in the classroom at Georgia College, all the professors and students would be so engaged in his lectures and could truly see his talent for teaching. I realized that Dr. Clark's passion for teaching extended beyond Georgia College, and that he took effective methods of teaching and shared them with professors at other universities.

Throughout my time at Clemson, I never hesitated to email Dr. Clark to ask a question about teaching, graduate school, or research. Dr. Clark continued to be available to help (even five years after I graduated from Georgia College) and invited me back to Georgia College to do a mock interview and job market presentation in preparation for the job market.

I graduated from Clemson in May 2017 and am now an economist for a litigation consulting firm. I still love economics and I will forever attribute my passion for economics and success in economics to Dr. Clark. I can say with confidence that there is no other professor that is more deserving of this award than Dr. Clark. Dr. Clark will always be my favorite teacher.

Sincerely,

Leah Kitashima
Associate
Analysis Group, Inc.

Letter of Support from Past Student – Alaina Totten

Dear Selection Committee,

Dr. Christopher Clark is the most influential professor I had the pleasure of taking courses with at Georgia College. I took two classes with Dr. Clark, Intermediate Microeconomics and Econometrics. Each of these classes were known amongst the students as extremely challenging, as they are in most economics undergraduate programs. After receiving my first C on a class quiz in his microeconomics class, I knew that Dr. Clark's courses were not going to be easy. He demanded excellence and inspired students to achieve this in his courses. It has been three years since I've been in class with him, but I still recall Dr. Clark's emphasis on making his students great.

During my last semester at Georgia College, Dr. Clark advised me through the graduate school application process, and eventually assisted me with a bidding war between two programs to increase my stipend. My first semester in the PhD program at Georgia Tech was certainly the most challenging academic experience of my life. In order to survive my graduate level Econometrics class, I relied on my notes from Dr. Clark's Econometrics class. I even used his notes to explain concepts to other students in my cohort. Throughout my first year as a PhD student at Georgia Tech, Dr. Clark went above and beyond standard teaching requirements by continuing to answer my questions and giving me advice and encouragement to make it through the year.

In preparation for teaching my first class, I am currently taking a "Learning how to teach" course at Georgia Tech. I find time and again that I look to Dr. Clark's teaching strategy to guide how I want to model my course. His innate ability to engage students made classes enjoyable, his grading strategy ensured students worked hard to learn the material every week, and his organization of the course material allowed for building and strengthening of economic skills over time.

My transition towards a research university has provided me with a new appreciation for the overall quality of teaching at Georgia College. The respect and patience I experienced with Faculty in undergrad is beyond anything that I have seen at Georgia Tech. Given the high standard of teaching excellence at Georgia College, I still find it easy to say that Dr. Clark is the best. He pushes students to their highest abilities, remains dedicated to students after they leave his classroom, and sparks a passion in a field of study that can be hard to love. I would highly recommend Dr. Clark for the Excellence in Teaching Award.

Alaina Totten
PhD Student
School of Economics
Georgia Institute of Technology
alainatotten@gatech.edu

Letter of Support from Past Student – Cullen Wallace

Committee,

I am pleased to recommend Dr. Chris Clark for the 2018 Georgia College Excellence in Teaching Award.

Among the entire faculty at Georgia College, none had a greater impact on my academic success than Dr. Clark. He is a dynamic professor who has a natural ability to teach, effectively conveying information and explaining concepts. Paired with this skill, he also possesses a strong desire to help students succeed. I visited his office often for assistance with material and advice concerning graduate school, both when I was officially his student and when I was not formally enrolled in one of his classes. He was always helpful and encouraging; it was he who suggested I consider postgraduate work in Economics and who prompted me to apply to Ph.D. programs, even when I did not consider myself a strong candidate. Today, I am in my third year of study at Florida State University pursuing a doctoral degree, and I would not have even applied without Dr. Clark's nudging.

Dr. Clark holds a reputation for having high expectations of his students, but he also equips them for success. For me, he taught the two courses with the most difficult material, Intermediate Microeconomics and Econometrics, but he had an ability to teach the concepts in a way that all could grasp. His lectures were entertaining and effective. He is the type of professor that I aim to emulate as I begin my teaching career.

To excel in teaching, one must have a depth of knowledge in the subject matter, successfully relay that knowledge to students, effectively assist when questions arise, and encourage students to learn beyond the classroom. Dr. Clark unquestionably succeeds in each of these areas. Therefore, I recommend Dr. Clark for the Excellence in Teaching Award with confidence. He is a candidate who should be honored with the award and would represent the university well.

Regards,



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Supporting Documents - Part 1

The first piece of support I provide is focused on the undergraduate research I help my students complete and their out academic outcomes. The following is an excerpt from a pedagogical paper I coauthored that is currently under review at the Journal of Economic Education. It discussed the results of the changes to the economics program I help developed.

“Since making these program changes in 2012, the number of our students entering PhD programs in economics has increased relative to those entering Master’s programs. Of our majors that entered into graduate programs in economics, 60% entered into PhD programs during the 5 years prior to the change and 88% entered PhD programs during the 5 years after the change.

Our students have been asking interesting questions and using their acquired skills to answer them to the best of their ability. Here are some examples of the kind of interesting questions our students have been asking:

“Does PTSD Affect Employment?”

“Does Police Militarization Affect Civilian Deaths?”

“Do Different Races Perceive their Financial Success Differently?”

“Does Legalizing Same-Sex Marriage Affect Hate Crime Rates?”

“Does Repeating or Skipping a Grade Affect Self-Assessed Intelligence?”

These students have also used some fairly complex econometrics techniques in an attempt to obtain answers to these kinds of questions. For example, one student used an ordered probit technique with properly interpreted marginal effect estimates when analyzing the question “Does Repeating or Skipping a Grade Affect Self-Assessed Intelligence?” Another student tackled the question “Does Legalizing Same-Sex Marriage affect Hate Crime Rates?” using a difference-in-difference technique that exploited the variation in same-sex marriage law across states and over time.

In conclusion, our students are engaging in what we think is a more realistic and practical research experience which serves as a better foundation for entering graduate school and data analysis careers. This modern capstone experience is also flexible enough to be used across a variety of programs. We feel this integrated pedagogical approach to student research in economics is a more effective way to help students learn and prepare for the future.”

Supporting Documents - Part 2

Over the last few years, my colleagues and I have developed multiple new economics courses in order to improve the educational outcomes of our students. As we develop these courses, we also share our innovative techniques and the results we've experienced with other economists interested in improving the teaching and learning of economics. One of the courses we developed and the paper we subsequently published has received considerable attention from economists all over the world. The course is Swansonomics, a course designed around giving student the opportunity to critically evaluate quotes pulled from the television series "Parks and Recreation". We use these Ron Swanson quotes as a tool to entice students into a stimulating discussion of Comparative Economic Systems. The image provided below is from Researchgate.com. Researchgate tracks the number of times a specific research paper has been read by visitors to the site. The Swansonomics paper has been read more than 1,400 times by teachers from all over the word. As a result of this attention, I have been able to present this research at multiple prominent economics conferences. Here is a link to the page if you are interested in learning more:

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/305800299_Swansonomics_Using_Parks_and_Recreation_to_Teach_Economics

The screenshot shows the ResearchGate interface for the article "Swansonomics: Using 'Parks and Recreation' to Teach Economics". At the top, there are tabs for "Article" and "Full-text available". The article title is prominently displayed, followed by the date "January 2015" and the authors "Brooke Conaway · Christopher Clark". On the right side, there are statistics: "Reads 1488" (with a "26 new" badge), "Recommendations 0" (with a "0 new" badge), and "Citations 1" (with a "0 new" badge). Below the statistics is a navigation bar with tabs for "Overview", "Comments", "Citations (1)", "References (70)", and "Related research (10+)". There are also buttons for "Download", "Share", and a dropdown menu. The main content area shows the "Abstract" section with an "Edit" link. The abstract text reads: "Based on a first-year multidisciplinary course, Swansonomics is a class where students examine the libertarian beliefs espoused by the character Ron Swanson from the television series Parks and Recreation. The show provides great examples of rent seeking, fiscal policy issues, social policy issues, and bureaucratic incentive structures. These Parks and Recreation video clips can be used in any class to cover a variety of issues. Examples of topics include the expected economic consequences of specific political or economic philosophies, unintended consequences of policies, various systems of taxation, public and private incentive structures, and varying degrees of capitalism and government intervention."