

Julie Harrison
TCU Box 292869
Fort Worth, TX 76129
j.harrison@tcu.edu
October 20, 2009

To whom it may concern,

I am very honored to write to you on behalf of Curt Rode who has been nominated for TCU's Deans Award in Teaching. I have known Professor Rode since the spring of 2009 when I was a student in his Introduction to Poetry class. More recently, I have taken his Sophomore English Writing Composition class.

Professor Rode is truly one of the best teachers I ever had. From the first day of class, it was clear that he was a natural teacher who related easily with the students and sparked their curiosity. His instant rapport with the class confirmed that he understood our generation very well. Through his lectures, he used that knowledge of the electronic-minded, instant-gratification culture that we live in today and expertly intertwined it with events of the past to teach how we can learn more about the subject matter, and then ultimately learn more about ourselves. What impressed me the most was his genuine respect for every single student in his class. It was truly evident that Professor Rode loved teaching college students. By the end of the semester, he gained the admiration and respect of all his students.

Day after day, he challenged us to be better students. He encouraged us all, and he set very high standards for us to achieve. During class discussions, he would probe into divisive topics to get us to really think about our beliefs. He asked thought-provoking questions and constantly queried and pushed us to defend answers and opinions—to take a stance for what we believed in. For instance in poetry class, he taught us to think for ourselves and to form our own opinions about the poems, not always relying on what the experts thought. This was unlike any other poetry teacher I encountered before. He taught me to trust my own judgment, and he gave me the confidence to present my arguments in a meaningful way. In conjunction with this, Professor Rode taught me how to write beyond the five-paragraph essay so that I could develop lifelong writing habits that would get my message across effectively. Very professional, Professor Rode was honest and fair with his evaluations of my work. He is the kind of teacher who is approachable and always available to help when the student needs it. He is efficient to respond to emails and phone calls, and he makes it easy for a student to seek assistance.

There is no other teacher who I believe is more deserving of the Deans Award in Teaching than Professor Rode. When I registered for his poetry class to fulfill my English requirement, I was nervous because of my lack of knowledge of poetry. Professor Rode changed all that. Because he believed in me and pushed me to excel, I now feel very educated about all forms of poetry, and I

actually appreciate the beauty of poetry so much more. But beyond that, because of him, I am a better person. While he challenged us to be better students, he also challenged each of us not to live up to the apathetic, self-absorbed stereotype that is often associated with young adults today. I took him up on that challenge, joined community service clubs, subscribed to news periodicals, and yes, enrolled in another one of his classes. Now I am grateful that he instilled in me a sense of confidence and pride in myself and in my work that I never experienced before. We need more positive, intelligent, and inspiring teachers like Professor Rode. Professors who change lives. Without reservation, I give my highest recommendation to Professor Curt Rode for this honor of which he is so worthy.

If I can be of further assistance, please don't hesitate to contact me at 612.360.9224. Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Julie Harrison". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned below the word "Sincerely,".

Julie Harrison