



DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

October 20, 2009

Dean Andrew Schoolmaster
TCU Box 297200
Fort Worth, TX 76129

Dear Dean Schoolmaster:

I write to nominate Curt Rode for the Deans' Teaching Award. Curt has been a conscientious and enthusiastic teacher since he stepped on campus in 2003, teaching a wide range of service courses and working diligently to build our creative writing program and new media endeavors.

Curt has taught 14 different classes since he began teaching at TCU, from our required composition courses (which he teaches regularly) to lower and upper-level creative writing courses as well as an undergraduate/graduate course he developed in creative writing. From his success in teaching these classes, interest has grown among students in creative writing courses. Further, with his work in the New Media Writing Studio, Curt has infused his courses with cutting-edge new media assignments. Pedagogically, his new media courses are at the level of recent hires we've made with specialists in this area, and students have taken notice. Curt's SPOTs are consistently strong (his total average is 3.631 for the past six years) and higher than the AddRan average. Anecdotally, I've advised or had in my classes many of his students, and they universally rave about his classes, saying they are both challenging and invigorating. In Curt's classes, creative writing is serious business; these courses are rigorous, and he doesn't rest on his laurels, either, as changing up and adding new assignments is his norm. Further, though it is not required in his job as instructor, he has directed four Honors theses and served on an additional committee, as well as served on a MA thesis committee. He also informally advises students, meeting with them to help them apply for graduate school or prepare for careers post-graduation. I believe that the energy and work he has put into his classes has directly resulted in growth of interest in writing among students at TCU.

The merits of Curt's teaching alone deem him worthy of the Deans' Teaching Award, but I also chose to nominate him for this award because of the ways he has gone above and beyond the job required of him to do essential work for the department that, while technically labeled as service, is all geared toward teaching and building the writing program at TCU. For example, Curt has been faculty sponsor of the TCU Literary Society since 2004, overseeing the group's work of promoting writing through events on and off campus (sponsoring readings, the poetry broadside series, etc.) and online and print literary journal. While the journal is technically student-run, Curt single-handedly designed the journal website (along with the creative writing website for the department) and guides the students in putting together the hard copy of the *eleven40seven* journal.

Curt has also been a member of the Composition Committee most of the time he's been at TCU. When I took over as Director of Composition, I requested him as a member because of his commitment to composition courses and his wealth of knowledge on new media pedagogy, as well as his thoughtful counsel on issues that face the committee. He has been a consistently productive and reliable member of the committee as we face issues of curricular reform, assessment, and much more.

Curt also served on the Creative Writing Committee until he began chairing it in 2008. After he took over as chair, creative writing efforts have moved into high gear. Since I serve on this committee, I've witnessed firsthand Curt's ambitious agenda that so far involves 1) proposing new courses that give a more commonsensical sequence to our creative writing offerings; 2) clarifying pre-requisites for creative writing courses; 3) overseeing readings on campus and the Creative Writing Awards; 4) vetting creative writing courses for Core designations; and more.

It's worth mentioning again: Curt does all of this having been hired in an instructor position. The amount of service he puts in—all directly connected to curricular or other issues that benefit students directly—is impressive and only improves rather than takes away from his teaching. And that's to say nothing of the unrecognized teaching work Curt does. Just last week I took my graduate Practicum class to the New Media Studio to discuss a new assignment. I'd met with Curt beforehand to receive guidance, and even though he wasn't required to be in the Studio at the time, he showed up to my class to assist me in facilitating the course, aware I had apprehension about the assignment. These are the informal gestures Curt frequently makes to help his colleagues be better teachers. All this is done, by the way, while still actively publishing his poetry.

As you can see, I can't say enough about how Curt Rode's teaching and service-for-teaching has enabled the English department to develop and expand. The department voted Curt as its Deans' Teaching Award nominee because he is a conscientious, committed teacher who is deserving of wider recognition for the high quality work he's done on behalf of students at TCU.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Charlotte Hogg". The signature is written in black ink on a white background and is enclosed within a thin black rectangular border.

Dr. Charlotte Hogg
Associate Professor
Director of Composition