

July 26, 2016

To whom it may concern:

I graduated from Abilene Christian University in May of 2014 with my bachelor's degree and again in May of 2015 with my Masters of Accountancy. I have known Dr. Jessup for over 5 years, first as a professor in my sophomore statistics class, and subsequently as his Teacher's Assistant (TA) for the remainder of my time at ACU, including the summer between my junior and senior year where I worked in a part time capacity as a research assistant. Dr. Jessup was by far the most influential professor I had during my time at ACU. Dr. Jessup first left an impression on me during the statistics class he taught my sophomore year, and later during the time I spent working with him, and finally, as I simply observed him interact with his colleagues, students and the University as a whole.

While I only took one class with Dr. Jessup during my time at ACU, I have not met another professor that cares so deeply about his students. Dr. Jessup, from day one, which also happened to be his first day as a professor at ACU, demonstrated care, understanding and aptitude for engaging students in the classroom. While teaching statistics, he did not just stop at ensuring that his students walked away from the classroom with the general knowledge to pass the course and receive credit. He desired for us to discover the same love of data and the possibilities of the course that he possessed.

Further, his desire to better our lives from being in his classroom was clear. Dr. Jessup consistently used real life examples to make statistics relevant to us. He asked questions to draw out the answers from us and make us think for ourselves. During the honors colloquium he taught, he created his own computer program to teach students about learning and choices. I was able to participate in the exercise as well. I noticed students getting frustrated at first, myself included, as we were unable to achieve the goal of the "game," but as we continued, we started to learn the theory behind the game without even realizing it. I remember Dr. Jessup's lecture following the game because he so powerfully demonstrated his ideas through a unique platform. This class highlighted Dr. Jessup's competency in the classroom, his deep understanding of his specific field, and his unique ability to communicate this understanding and passion to his students.

While working with Dr. Jessup as his research assistant, I was able to see firsthand his deep care for students. Regularly when I was in his office a student would come by and ask Dr. Jessup a question about a course they were taking, or sometimes just about life. Dr. Jessup, no matter how busy he was would always take the time to sit down and explain the concept, often drawing it out on the whiteboard and make sure the student was comfortable with the ideas before they left. On one occasion, there was a difficult student struggling in one of Dr. Jessup's classes. He took the time to help this student whenever he came in to ask questions, by suggesting studying methods, tutors etc. However, this did not just apply to struggling students. Some of the brightest students in his class would often drop by to make sure they understood an assignment or to ask a question. Dr. Jessup never just settled for the easy answer, seeing the potential in these students he would always challenge them to do even better, try harder, and think deeper. He would explain concepts or teach things that were not even on the course syllabus because he truly believes in what he teaches and wanted to push his students and give them the opportunity to reach their greatest potential. Dr. Jessup taught me that teaching was about so much more than what happened in the classroom.

He also took the time to mentor and teach me even though I was not in his class and it was not part of his job description. He was not afraid to ask me hard questions or make me think about things in a new way. As I worked on several research projects with him, he took the time to ask for my input and explain the concepts to me rather than just showing me the data he needed sorted and inputted. He made me feel a part of the team and cast a vision for me that energized and excited me to come to work and research every day. Dr. Jessup and Elisa invited me to their home and welcomed me into their lives. They both demonstrated Godly Christian leadership and hospitality and embodied truly what a Christian college should be like.

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I cannot think of someone who exemplifies the ideals and values of Abilene Christian University more, or who is better qualified to serve as a tenured professor than Dr. Jessup.

Sincerely,

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