

July 22, 2016

I am writing to endorse Dr. Ryan Jessup's application for tenure. I met Ryan in August 2011 when he began teaching at ACU. Since then, I have come to know him well as a colleague, a friend, and a superb teacher and scholar.

Several years ago, my course schedule had two classes in the same classroom but with an hour between them. Throughout that semester, I typically stayed in the classroom through that intervening hour, working in the back of the room and observing a data mining course that Ryan taught during that time. I saw Ryan seek to explain concepts to students by a variety of approaches, trying to provide each student a conceptualization that suited him or her. Ryan's enthusiasm for his course content often overcame a student's initial indifference, drawing the students into the discussion and motivating them to really engage with the ideas.

In fall 2015, Ryan and I co-taught an honors colloquium focused on Christian apologetics, a topic of shared interest for us. I found him to be meticulous in his preparation for this course, constructing and refining the general outline and specific details of each class meeting. We discussed and implemented a number of activities designed to help students engage with the material in a "hands-on" way, giving them a real application of higher-level ideas. Ryan has an appealing and effectual teaching style, capturing student interest while emphasizing and encouraging learning.

I have worked with Ryan in scholarly research projects where our interests overlapped. Ryan is very good in identifying and building on shared areas in this way, working with a number of people here and at other institutions. Each of our collaborative projects also included one of his students (a different student each time), providing them a great opportunity to be involved in real research. I often have seen him mentor students in this and other ways.

Ryan demonstrates the best characteristics of Abilene Christian University in his dedication to excellent teaching, his desire for collaborative advance, his service to students and university both within and beyond the classroom, and his commitment to furthering his field. I strongly recommend that his tenure application be approved.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "John Homer". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "J" and a long, sweeping underline.

Dr. John Homer

Director, School of Information Technology & Computing
Associate Professor of Computer Science
Abilene Christian University