Georgia Tech | Scheller College of Business

January 22, 2015

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing this letter to nominate Dr. Michael Smith for the **CETL Undergraduate Educator Award.** Michael joined Georgia Tech's Scheller College of Business in January 2013 as a full-time non-tenure track faculty. Since day one, he has proven himself to be an invaluable asset to the College and to the Information Technology Management (ITM) area. I believe that Michael's dedication and passion for undergraduate education and his stellar performance have made him an extraordinary candidate for this award.

UNDERGRADUATE TEACHING

Over the course of the past two years, Michael has taught four different undergraduate courses. Michael developed from scratch and taught several times MGT 4803 Project Management (currently teaching it for the third time in Spring 2015). For the other three courses that were already offered before (MGT 2200 Information Technology; MGT 4052 Systems Analysis and Design; MGT 4053 Business Data Communications), Michael has put great effort in re-developing important parts of the courses. His courses are well subscribed and students greatly value the experience obtained in these classes. Michael has received very good teaching evaluations from students (e.g., 4.6, 4.4, and 4.8 for MGT 4052, MGT 4053, and MGT 4803, respectively, in Fall 2014). Michael is also closely involved in the development and supervision of MGT 4803 Spreadsheet Modeling for Business Decision Making, which is currently being piloted by an ITM PhD student. He was selected to deliver two courses to students during the Oxford residential experience of summer 2014.

In all of his undergraduate courses, Michael uses LMS (learning management systems such as T-square) to support all aspects of course delivery including posting all PowerPoint presentations and grades. He is also introducing students to Lynda (for software training) and encourages students to use the College of Business VLAB (for remote software access). He is also piloting D2L (desire to learn) in one course in Spring 2015 for CETL for possible institute-wide deployment. All of his courses feature written reports and oral presentations. All oral presentations are recorded and made available to students for review. Furthermore, all of his courses reinforce the use of spread sheeting with Excel, an essential business tool.

Moreover, Michael has taken significant steps towards "flipping" the classroom in all undergraduate classes, including the creation of preparation guides for all on-line content, on-line prep quizzes, on-line question sets for midterm preparation, and hands-on classroom activities. All of his courses are revised each semester to reflect changes in the ITM field or in coverage that will prepare students for work.

SERVICE RELATED TO UNDERGRADUATE EDUCATION

Michael reorganized the ITM undergraduate concentration and ITM certificate curriculum with the advice and consent of colleagues into five career tracks based on the College's particular strengths vis a vis desires of current and potential employers. The ultimate goal was to increase consistency in the capabilities of graduates of the program and their competitiveness, and to differentiate us from larger programs at Georgia State and UGA. These have been approved by the Scheller undergraduate curriculum committee and will soon be voted on by the faculty. Moreover, he has been advising

undergraduate students on courses to take in the concentration, resume writing, and interviewing and other interactions with potential employers.

Michael has taken on the role of liaison between ITM students and industry, meeting every semester on and off campus with firms that are interested in hiring Scheller ITM students to determine what they seek in new hires, and how we can create win-win interactions between undergraduates and potential employers through guest lectures in classes and presentations through the MIS Student Club. This student club was organized and has been advised by Michael since Spring 2014. The club is now preparing to affiliate with the Association for Information Systems (AIS) as a student chapter, which will give our students access to competitions against students from other institutions.
Michael also has been actively involved with student competitions. He organized Georgia Tech's participation in the Bank of America Campus Challenge (Fall 2013). GT had one of the largest numbers of students participating and the team from GT won the national competition. He also founded Local BizTech Case Competition and advised the Organizing Committee (Spring 2014, Fall 2014, Spring 2015). He also coached and accompanied the GT teams to CoMIS Case Competition in Minneapolis, MN (Spring 2014), and Deloitte National Case Competition in Westlake, TX (Spring 2014).

Last but not least, Michael created and maintains the ITM-Students email list through GT's listserv to spread information about interview opportunities and other events of interest to ITM concentration students. Many students shared how valuable this communication channel proved over the past year.

In sum, I strongly recommend Michael Smith for the CETL Undergraduate Educator Award. Thank you for your consideration.

Kind regards,

Sridhar Narasimhan
Senior Associate Dean
Co-Director, Business Analytics Center
Scheller College of Business
Georgia Tech
Atlanta, GA 30308-1149
404.894.4378
sri@scheller.gatech.edu

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Statement on Teaching

Michael A. Smith
January 2015

When I think of teaching at Georgia Tech, foremost in my mind is what the Institute is for and why my students have chosen to be here over many easier places. So I'm going to address that first and then talk about a few general teaching principles that I believe are effective. I will close with expressions of some challenges and aspirations.

Fundamental to me is that Georgia Tech was chartered in 1885 to promote the economic development of Georgia through industry. Tech was *not* founded to polish the sons and daughters of wealthy families, to perpetuate the study of the Classics, to train teachers, or to prepare aspirants to the clergy. At the time, certain leaders realized that the state was being held back for lack of engineers, scientists, and managers to create and run enterprises. Tech was founded to enable the youth of Georgia to enter those fields so that *the people of Georgia could control their own economic destiny*. The evidence of Tech's success at supplying the needed talent has been apparent in every region of the state since the early 1900s and, partly as a result, Georgia's economy can support many people in professions that cannot be studied at Tech. Despite the proliferation of majors in the last twenty years, that original purpose is still remembered-- Tech's status as a world class center of research notwithstanding, graduates of the Institute still enjoy referring to the alma mater as "The North Avenue Trade School". Tech still prepares its students to make things, to solve problems, an*d to get things done*. That is the teaching tradition I am part of.

Today, as they always have, students come to Tech because they believe it will create economic opportunity for them. Tech is not a party school. It is not an athletic powerhouse where one can have the pleasure of always cheering for the winner. Nor is it an unchallenging country club where young adults can park themselves for a few years while they finish growing up. Students come here expecting to work hard and to be rewarded later for it with *job opportunities*. Regardless of my own priorities, my students, their parents, and the people of Georgia expect me to do that.

So, whether I am planning or updating courses, or interacting with students outside class, or meeting with people from the business community, I keep in mind that, for Georgia and for my students, Tech is about economic empowerment and opportunity. I teach in the business college and, to me, that means that my students should learn something in every class that will enable them to be more useful in business. Consequently, I strive to put every fact and every skill I require my students to learn in the context of preparing them for work—something that they see the value in. The feedback I have received from alumni young and old indicates that this is a better technique than building slowly from theory (often for several semesters) before students may solve problems that resemble something they would find in the "real world". Indeed, many of my students from engineering (especially) remark that this is something they really enjoy about my classes and business classes in general.

To bring this about, I pass much time meeting with people from industry and business to find out what they are looking for in new hires, what kinds of problems they expect them to be able to solve, what qualities help new employees advance quickly, and what they enjoy most about their work. This information—not the model curriculum created by other academics--drives my curriculum and course

planning. One might say therefore, that I really begin with the end in mind, and that end is a set of learning objectives related to making my students useful in their chosen field.

I believe strongly in *learning through experience* and, to that end, interact regularly with potential employers to put them in contact with my students, and I encourage my students to intern and co-op as much as they can. This enables them to practice the skills and they learned and to convince themselves of their relevance. It is satisfying when a student returns from an internship or checks in from a permanent job and says that they were happy to find that the things they learned in class were useful.

Also because I believe in learning through experience, I have "flipped" my classrooms to a large extent. I have reduced lectures to "lecturettes" and found preparation material on-line to assign my students to view in lieu of long lectures. Now I as much as seventy-five percent of class time for activities designed to reinforce or practice the prep work. So the majority of my work has changed "from prepping presentations to prepping practice". This has not been without cost. My students are masters at the "old way" of doing things and I am challenged sometimes to "teach more". However, I believe strongly in this approach and I intend to improve the preparation resources and in-class activities each semester until no one can say that they would have done better with a lecture.

I believe that all business students should know how to work in teams and to produce written report and deliver oral presentations. The working world demands these things. To that end, all students in my classes do group work. Another important benefit of this, however, is that I use the group projects to force students to practice the skills and apply the knowledge they have gained in class. Standards for presentations and reports are high but students can get times to practice before and submit drafts and most have figured out that this is a good idea. As a result, I get comments each semester to the effect that the group work was "a pain" but that is was one of the most beneficial aspects of the course.

In summary, four principles inform my curriculum and course design: relevance to work, learning from experience, working in groups, and communications.

I am challenged every day in the classroom however. For a person with a doctorate, a major challenge is to realize that the students who are sitting in our classrooms are not simply younger versions of us. Most are not in school to follow in our footsteps but are taking our courses to satisfy degree requirements or to acquire some skills and knowledge that will make them more employable. So their motivations and aspirations are different. So I find myself often giving myself a "reality check" on how much to expect from them. They're with me for their own reasons, not to satisfy mine.

Finally, one of the greatest challenges for a person who survived a "sink or swim" experience as an undergrad, and who realizes the value of that experience, is to accept that there are other ways to promote competence and perseverance in our students. I don't believe any student fails at Georgia Tech for lack of intelligence but many fail from lack of maturity and the Georgia Tech of old excelled at weeding out students who are not ready at eighteen or nineteen to thrive without constant oversight from parents, coaches, and counselors. It's my job to help them grow into higher standards. That does not mean that there is not weeding out. I simply don't see that as part of my job but as a necessary occasional "evil."

--Michael A Smith

Evidence of Teaching Excellence

Overall course ratings from recent years:

Term	Business Data Communications	Systems Analysis and Design	Project Management
2014 Fall	4.4	4.6	4.8
2014 Summer*			3.2
2014 Spring	4.4	4.0-5.0	3.8
2013 Fall	4.0	4.6	4.5
2013 Summer		4.0	
2013 Spring	4.6		

* Oxford short summer course (6 weeks)

Other:

3-time "Thank a Teacher" recipient and guest at Dean Griffin Day.

Dear Committee,

As **Professor Michael Smith**'s department head, I am writing to support Dr. Smith for the **2015 CETL Undergraduate Educator Award.**

As attested in the nomination letter by Scheller College's Senior Associate Dean Professor Sridhar Narasimhan, Mike has made outstanding achievements beyond the 8 dimensions (listed on the CETL selection criteria) that qualify him for an award. Mike's teaching effectiveness goes way beyond an average good rating of 4.6 out of 5 (for the three courses he taught in fall 2014). I can't agree more with Prof. Narasimhan's assessments, and in addition, I would like to offer and emphasize the following additional supporting evidence.

Since he arrived at Georgia Tech two years ago, Mike has dedicated himself to improving undergraduate education for Information Technology Management (ITM) students in the Scheller College. One thing that sets him apart from other non-tenure track faculty who are good teachers is that he thinks about the big picture concerning our concentration. Everything he does fits somewhere in this big picture.

As soon as he arrived, Mike asked the question, "Why should somebody come to Georgia Tech to study business? And why ITM?" Students asked the question, "What can I do with a business degree with an ITM concentration?" To answer these questions, Mike led the redevelopment of the ITM concentration and certificate. He reviewed the needs of employers and the courses that we offer in Scheller and created five "career tracks" for our students. He worked with our area faculty and met with the staff of our undergraduate office to help them understand our tracks. He also prepared advising documents for the staff and students. These tracks have helped us explain to students how ITM is different from Computer Science. We expect all these changes to take effect in the next catalog but the benefits are already clear since our ITM students have a good idea of the careers we are preparing them for and what courses they should take. Mike also spends a lot of time helping our students with course advising, interviewing, and resumes.

In fact, Mike does such a good job explaining what we are preparing students for in a business college at an engineering institute that the Scheller undergraduate office invited him to speak to all the entering freshmen in business during his first year. Mike gave an enthusiastic talk inspired by Nick Selby's "You can do that" speech. He explained to the business students the role they will play in "building the Iron Man suit". The audience enjoyed his speech so much that the student leaders in Scheller asked for him to be invited again.

Mike meets with employers and former students to make sure his courses cover topics students need to know to be competitive. As a result, he has reprepped three courses: Business Data Communications, Project Management, and Systems Analysis and Design. He brings guest speakers to talk about topics, share their experiences, and talk about what they like about their work. Mike also found some unmet needs in our curriculum so he is supervising a PhD student to develop a new course in spread sheet modeling for decision support, a course that other areas in business have requested for several years. The PhD student is teaching for the first time this course in spring 2015. He is also working with businesses to create a survey course in enterprise information systems. These courses will be important additions to our list of electives.

Mike also asked the question, "Why should somebody attend class in person when so many good courses are available on-line?" In answer, Mike began "flipping" his courses so time spent in class together could be used

for doing things that make good use of that time, such as answering questions in groups and sharing results with the rest of the class and giving immediate feedback.

Mike believes that skills such as writing and speaking, and technical skills such as spread sheeting, should be developed in all our students so he includes written reports and presentations and Excel exercises in all his classes. He requires his students to work in teams and takes time in class to explain some practices of good teams.

He also believes that all business students should be able to create a business case so he is introducing techniques for doing that, and practice, in all his classes. He has accompanied teams from Georgia Tech to the CoMIS Competition in Minnesota and the Deloitte National Competition in Texas to observe the best teams and talk with students and their advisors to learn what our peer institutions are doing in this area. Now he helps teams from Tech prepare for the competitions. To help all our students prepare for case interviews and competitions, he founded the BizTech case competition in Scheller, which is open each semester to all undergraduates, not just ITM students. The third competition will take place next week. Mike prepares the case and helps with facilities and some publicity but, as he planned from the beginning, the MIS Club that he advises has taken over most of the work of running the competition, which will free Mike to develop other ideas for helping our students.

Finally, although it does not concern undergraduate education, when our colleague Sandy Slaughter died unexpected in the fall, Mike stepped forward to finish her two graduate classes for the department and has agreed to cover her class for next summer. However, he has made it clear that he has no interest in doing this long term because he is dedicated to our undergraduates. Because he is covering a graduate course this summer, he only had time to offer one undergraduate course. To decide which course to offer, he created an on-line survey and sent the link to all the ITM students and is offering the course they voted for.

Given his accomplishments, I believe that Professor Mike Smith is highly deserving of an Award for Undergraduate Educator, and I am more than pleased to strongly support him.

Sincerely yours,

D.J. Wu, Ph.D.
Area Coordinator and Professor
Information Technology Management
Georgia Institute of Technology

February 2, 2015

Dear CETL Undergraduate Educator Award Committee,

When Mike arrived at Tech two years ago, he reached out immediately to the Denning Program to learn more about the opportunities we present to his ITM students and to find out what he could do to help. He has consistently encouraged his students to apply to the program, has included information about our program in the advising documents he prepares for the undergrad office, and continues to attend our events and interact with our personnel to learn more about the projects our students are working on and what he can do in his classes to better prepare them.
Mike has expressed his frustration at seeing "the same students" turn up in all activities and selective programs and is seeking ways to get more "average" students involved in high profile activities such as business case competitions.

I also observed Mike in the classroom, in his Systems Analysis and Design class, and discussed with him the way he organizes his courses. Although a stranger who walked into his classroom would find the atmosphere informal because Mike plays 70s and 80s music as students enter and leave and sits on the front row of desks or stands in front of the podium more than behind it, Mike's courses are highly structured, with preparatory activities and assessments, in class presentations, activities, and assessments, and homework and questions sets to help students prepare for midterms and finals. All materials are posted on-line and feedback throughout the term is frequent.

All Mike's courses are partially "flipped". The introduction to most material is outside of class and before the topic is addressed in class. Unlike some who are flipping their courses, for the most part, Mike uses videos and other material he has found rather than recording his own lectures. Since he doesn't create the content for his courses specifically, he provides guides for most resources to help students identify the important points.

Lectures are interactive as he seeks responses from students based on the preparatory material and in-class assignments. He is able to give immediate feedback and assess students' level of understanding in class. He also works in illustrations from his own work and life experience, frequently humorously, to illustrate important points and add to what's in the text and videos.

I have known Mike for over twenty years. He is a wonderful teacher and colleague. Please contact me if you need any additional information from me.

Sincerely,

Robert (Bob) Burgess
Administrative Director; Denning Technology and Management Program
Scheller College of Business; Georgia Institute of Technology
800 West Peachtree St. NW, Suite 4428
Atlanta, GA 30308-1149
(404) 894-3899 (office)
(404) 385-7706 (fax)
robert.burgess@scheller.gatech.edu

January 27th, 2015

To Whom It May Concern:

During my time at Georgia Tech I haven't had a professor as positively influential as Dr. Smith. I can say this definitively as I've taken three courses with him and have mentored under him for an internship and a Co-op. He has served as my advisor in personal and professional matters, and has always been there to lend an ear and uncover possibilities that I may not have been aware of to begin with. I believe that my undergraduate experience without Dr. Smith simply wouldn't have been the same.

Dr. Smith is a superb professor who is constantly seeking to learn from his students, and from industry. He constantly seeks feedback from students to understand what resources, teachings or materials he could provide for students the competitive edge, and isn't afraid to adjust his lesson plans to ensure that the students get the most value out of their time with him. What I liked most about his teaching style was that students were encouraged to be active participants in their educational experience and not simply 'consumers' waiting to hear the facts of a lecture. He's incredibly entrepreneurial and encourages all of his students to "get out there and try it!".
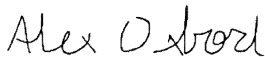
Looking back, I appreciate how seriously he took his role as an educator. If topics were meant to be covered before an exam he would often stay up late recording live presentations and then uploading them to T-square. He would carefully screen additional resources and expect that they be reviewed before his test. His tests were comprehensive, challenging, long - yet very rewarding to finally get over with.

But tests were just the beginning - large, multi-phased and complex group projects were the norm (and came to be expected) for his classes. His group projects pushed me to understand my role when working with teams, and helped me understand my own weaknesses. The difficulty and rigor of his classes were, in a sense, the perfect foundation for personal development.

But Dr. Smith is so much more than just a great professor. He's also a great leader. Since he came to Scheller he has transformed the Information Technology program by expanding course offerings, overseeing the Information Systems club, and encouraging students to enter challenging leadership positions and programs.

There's so much that I'd like to say about Dr. Smith and the impact that he's had on me over the years, but there just simply isn't enough space on this page. That being said, I would really love to see Dr. Smith be extended the CETL Award - he deserves it.

Thank you,
Alex Oxford

Alex Oxford
Information Technology Management, Class of 2014
Boulder, Colorado 80303

1/30/2015

To whom it may concern,

As I come to the close of my final semester as an undergraduate student at Georgia Tech, there is no professor I find more deserving of the CETL Undergraduate Educator Award than Dr. Smith. Dr. Smith is the single most genuine, intelligent, and relatable professor I have had in all of my years of learning. His passion for information technology jumps at you from the minute you sit in his class. As a Junior undergraduate student, I knew very little about IT and about what it would take to be a successful member of the industry. With Dr. Smith's guidance and teachings, I was opened up to a whole world of possibilities beyond programming, many of which I look to do in my professional career. He makes an effort to with students beyond just the teaching material, and loves to discuss movies, pop culture and the newest dining scenes around town. His desire to mentor and befriend students is best exemplified in his complete overhaul of the IT Management concentration. He reworked courses, introduced new topics, and organized the first ever MIS club. Through the club, Dr. Smith works to bring in people from across the IT industry to showcase what they do in their professional careers, answer the questions of students, and provide invaluable opportunities to network with people in industry.

The first time I met Dr. Smith was in my first of two classes taught by him on the same day. Normally, I would have been a bit uneasy about having the same professor for multiple classes. But in truth, it was a blessing and a pleasure to be able to spend that much time learning about my field from an outstanding professor. Dr. Smith is the reason that I am going into IT after I graduate, and one day I expect to come back to mentor young students through his MIS club. He has left an indelible mark on the Scheller College of Business and I greatly appreciate everything he has done for me, personally and professionally.

William Grande

Dear CETL Honors Award Committee,

I first met Dr. Smith right before the 2014 Deloitte nation-wide case competition. My team and I had advanced past the local competition here at Georgia Tech and were headed to Dallas for nationals, and Dr. Smith had generously agreed to volunteer his time and effort to travel with us as our Georgia Tech professor representative and mentor. Before the trip, I walked into Dr. Smith's office one day just to introduce myself and within seconds of meeting him, I had already marked him down as one of the nicest and most genuine human beings I had ever met. Instead of just a simple meet and greet, we ended up talking for close to an hour about his thoughts on the competition, how he can best help our team prepare for what was ahead, and even about his aggressive plan for making Georgia Tech the hub for consulting companies to recruit students. He even offered to meet with our team over the weekend to run through a mock case and film our presentation so we knew exactly where our strengths and weaknesses lied. This is a man who teaches all day, five days a week, and is now volunteering what little free time he has on the weekends to mentor students through a competition. If that isn't the definition of dedication, then I don't know what is. Even throughout the entire case competition in Dallas, Dr. Smith was there to constantly support the team and make sure our logic was up to par and that we would be able to represent Georgia Tech well.

Upon returning from the competition, I had enjoyed the company of Dr. Smith outside of class so much, that I decided to sign up for one of his classes: Business Data Communications. I registered for the class without even reading the class description. The only two things I knew were that it was an IT related class and Dr. Smith was teaching it. The latter was the main selling point. Being a Finance concentration and knowing close to nothing about the IT world, I had my doubts about whether I could survive in an upper-level IT class, but Dr. Smith soon put those worries to bed. Perhaps the most amazing aspect of his style of teaching is that he uses metaphors to explain extremely complicated and technical subjects so that the average human being – me in this scenario – can fully understand what is going on. Albert Einstein once said that "if you can't explain it to a six year old, you don't understand it yourself". This quote truly exemplifies Dr. Smith's teaching style and his ability to simplify topics as well as his vast knowledge and understanding of the subject at hand. In addition to time in class, Dr. Smith is the best teacher I have ever had at responding to questions over email and availing himself for office hours. Within five minutes of sending him an email, I would receive a detailed answer. I also felt incredibly comfortable walking into his office at any time to chat about a certain topic from class, and I can honestly say that freedom in tandem with his excellence in teaching contributed to my understanding of IT topics I thought I could never comprehend. After having gone through Business Data Communications with Dr. Smith, I can proudly say that I know more about the IT world than 95% of people on this planet.

Dr. Smith clearly has a deep passion for enhancing the education of students and doing everything in his power to ensure all Georgia Tech students are able to maximize their full potential, and I strongly believe he is the most qualified and most deserving professor for the CETL Undergraduate Educator Award.

Sincerely,

Elton Chang

Dear CETL,

My name is Dianarose Fraum, and I am a second year Business Administration student at Georgia Tech. I am writing to recommend Dr. Mike Smith, my Information Technology (IT) professor during the Oxford Study Abroad Program, for your Undergraduate Educator Award.

My relationship with Dr. Smith began this past summer, when he was my professor for MGT 2200. During our first class, as we reviewed the syllabus, I remember thinking about how difficult it was going to be to stay focused on school work while in this new, breathtaking town. However, he quickly proved me wrong. Dr. Smith is genuinely one of the most engaging teachers I've had during my time at Tech. His passion for IT, helping students, and life makes him the ideal professor. He connects IT to the personal lives of students; regardless of your specific interests, you learn the practical application of IT to them. During MGT 2200, we analyzed a variety of different company business models, and how they have used IT strategies to make their business more efficient, learned MySQL, became proficient in Excel, and learned business and teamwork skills. Dr. Smith was not an easy professor by any means. My peers and I spent hours watching Lynda videos on Excel, worked together to figure out how to solve our homework, and spent extra time out of class with Dr. Smith to understand the material. He met with students during meals at Oxford, made himself available to teach students during almost all times of day, and remained in the classroom before and after class for students that wanted extra help with IT, travelling, or general life questions. I can confidently say that MGT 2200 with Dr. Smith equipped me to succeed in any team or business setting, and through this class he served as a mentor to his students.

Fortunately, many of teachers at Scheller have a passion for teaching and working with students, so this is what differentiates Dr. Smith: He has an insatiable thirst for knowledge and he not only wants to share his insight with students, but desires to spark that in every student. In order to accomplish this, he takes advantage of every opportunity to involve himself with students. One method he uses is teaching a variety of courses. He has taught a variety of management courses, is co-teaching a BMED class that excites him to no end, has redeveloped for courses, is in the process of redeveloping more courses, and has successfully developed courses. From personal experience and speaking to other students in his classes I can confidently say he is organized, dedicated, and enthusiastic during every class he teaches.

Dr. Smith's accomplishments do not end there. He is also organized and advises the Management Information Systems Club. Being Project Manager of Organization Relations, I can attest to the fact that this is one of the most active student organizations in Scheller. This club is now preparing to affiliate with the AIS (Association for Information Systems) as a student chapter, which will give our students access to competitions against students from other institutions. Dr. Smith meets every semester on campus and off with firms that are interested in hiring Scheller ITM students to determine what they seek in new hires, and how I can create win-win interactions between undergraduates and potential employers through guest lectures in classes and presentations through the MIS Club. He will often explain how these meetings have impacted his course content.

Aside from organizational involvement, he involves himself with other projects that further the development of Scheller leaders. He organized Georgia Tech's participation in the Bank of America Campus Challenge, and largely attributed to his efforts promoting the event, Georgia Tech had one of the largest numbers of student participating and won the national competition. With the desire to bring a Georgia Tech team the following year, he attended the CoMIS Case Competition as observer in Spring 2013. In Spring 2014, after doing all the logistical and recruiting work, he brought a team from GT to compete in the CoMIS Case Competition in Minneapolis, Minnesota. His extensive work with case competitions doesn't end there. He accompanied the GT team to Deloitte National Case Competition in Westlake, Texas in Spring 2014, founded Local BizTech Case Competition and advised the Organizing Committee for the past three semesters, and has made every effort to spread the word about these case competitions to students. He has effectively done that by creating and maintaining the ITM-Students email list through GT's listserv to spread information about events of interest and interview opportunities.

Dr. Smith's accomplishments are too many to list. He goes above and beyond any student's expectations for a teacher, and as any respectable leader would, he motivates those around him to give a hundred and ten percent as well. So, when you are considering who deserves this award. I hope you think of the man who offered to read the traditional Worchester speech in Latin in front of all 150 students, faculty, and Worchester staff at our last dinner. I hope you think of the enthusiastic man who practiced his Latin accent in the mirror, so he "could represent Tech well in front of the Worchester employees". I hope you think of responsible professor who brought his own copy of the speech, because even though they were supposed to have it for him, he taught us to never show up somewhere unprepared; sure enough they did not have his speech, but in true Dr. Smith fashion, he was still ready to go. And I hope you think of the man that did this because it was "a fun challenge" and a way for him to serve the place he loves most, Georgia Tech.

As I conclude this letter in Scheller, I am again reminded of the impact that Dr. Smith has on the student population. A student just approached me, explaining how they are learning audio manipulation in their IT class and they "have the best teacher". Who would that be? None other than Mike Smith. It is not just me, or members of the undergraduate students and faculty, or members of Dr. Smith's MIS club, or students that he has influenced through case competitions. Dr. Smith has had a profound impact on multiple diverse student populations, and I can think of no one more deserving of this award.

Sincerely,

Dianarose

January 26, 2015

To whom it may concern,

It is my pleasure to write a letter of support on behalf of Dr. Michael Smith for the Undergraduate Educator Award. Dr. Smith is both the advisor of the club I am president of and my professor for MGT 4803: Project Management.

I met Dr. Smith two years ago when he gathered a handful of information technology management (ITM) students in a room and told us it was time to start a club for all students interested in ITM. For the last 5 months that I have been involved as president, Dr. Smith's attitude, availability, and excitement have been driving forces behind helping us get the organization off the ground. He has made himself available as a resource, always just an email away with the answers to my questions. The advice he has offered about the direction of the organization has led to the MIS club becoming a chartered student organization and the newest student chapter in the Association of Information Systems. Dr. Smith's efforts have ensured the growth of the MIS Club, by offering us everything from his network of professional contacts to tips on the ins and outs of hosting a successful event.

His dedication to students is equally as evident in the classroom as it is with our organization. Dr. Smith teaches many of the core courses for students in the ITM track, as well as electives taken by all business majors. These courses are modified flipped classrooms that are really engaging and lead to deep understanding of the material. Lectures are interactive and supplemented by prep-quizzes and daily activities. By requiring participation, Dr. Smith ensures that we are engaged in our learning and applying principles so we understand the use of the concepts we study. Although there are many terms and concepts to learn, it does not feel like I am memorizing material. Instead, it feels like I am growing an active vocabulary to describe what we're doing in class. Project Management is the first course I have had where I understand the value of every single topic we learn.

Finally, Dr. Smith is a pillar in my degree program. There is an understanding among students that his classes are ones to look forward to – they are widely known as challenging but also very interesting. His courses not only offer valuable information but also invaluable skills like how to think like business professionals and how to be dynamic and active in a work environment.

Dr. Michael Smith is a great educator and an outstanding leader for all Business students. His dedication to our academic and professional growth inside the classroom and out makes him an excellent candidate for the Undergraduate Educator Award.

Sincerely,

Julia Falvey