Georgia Tech School of Biology

Dr. Terry W. Snell
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School of Biology
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January 30, 2015

Dr. Esther Jordan
Center for Enhancement of Teaching and Learning

Dear Dr. Jordan:

I am delighted to nominate Dr. Chrissy Spencer, Academic Professional in the School of Biology, for the Geoffrey G. Eichholz Faculty Teaching Award. Dr. Spencer embodies the criteria for the Eichholz. She exhibits teaching excellence in the Biological Principles introductory course, where she uses innovative strategies with learning catalytics, in-class activities, and fosters effective recitation teaching by coaching the recitation TAs. Dr. Spencer chairs the Introductory Biology Committee, where she spear-headed a project with Dr. Shana Kerr to generate learning objectives for each lecture in the two introductory Biology courses. In Fall 2014 she taught our sophomore-level Ecology class using a "flipped" model and incorporated service-learning into the students projects. The service-learning partnerships sparked a probable collaboration between Trees Atlanta and the Georgia Tech Urban Honey Bee Project. In her commitment to undergraduate instruction, she engages and challenges students while supporting their learning.

Dr. Spencer demonstrates teaching excellence in introductory undergraduate courses Biological Principles, Ecology, and Genetics lab through the use of innovative strategies that specifically address the challenges associated with teaching in the core curriculum. In the Biological Principles and Ecology courses, she uses the on-line platform Learning Catalytics for in-class activities to make the large classroom smaller, allowing every student to ask questions and work through course concepts. Peer-to-peer and TA-to-peer instruction in the classroom and on the on-line forum Piazza both provide more support to students and allow them to make connections with peers to increase their likelihood to discuss course concepts and give them the confidence and a vehicle to ask questions in the 200-student class. She strives to make content connections to engage on-majors in Biological Principles, and to help majors and non-majors appreciate the relevance of ecological concepts to their daily lives.

Regarding **commitment to undergraduate instruction,** Dr. Spencer, in collaboration with Dr. Shana Kerr, expanded an Introductory Biology Learning Objectives initiative to build a consistent set of learning objectives for Biological Principles for the Genetics and Evolution lectures of the course. The Introductory Biology Committee was enthusiastic about the idea and collaborated to create 3-6 objectives for every lecture in our two-semester introductory sequence. Having these objectives provides a strong foundation for

faculty to explore alternatives to lecture format, with the goal to help students meet course learning goals.

Dr. Spencer engages and challenges students while providing appropriate support to meet those challenges. In General Ecology in Fall 2014, Dr. Spencer inverted or "flipped" her approach to time spent in class. Students completed reading questions before class so they were prepared to engage in Team-Based Learning exercises in class. In the same course, she converted the project format from student presentations of published research to student's completing their own research on and near campus. The new project format linked students to campus and community partnerships with groups like the Georgia Tech Urban Honey Bee Project, ArkFab at the Truly Living Well community garden, and Trees Atlanta's BeltLine restoration project. Teams of approximately six students designed experiments, collected data, and reported their results back to their project partner in a public poster session held in Clough Commons on the last day of class. Groups met with Dr. Spencer several times throughout the process and learned not only research skills but also teamwork skills in the process. She completed this service-learning effort simultaneous to participation in the CETL Teaching Scholar's program for 2014-15, and that group provided a strong sounding board as she developed the service-learning and the Team-Based Learning approach. Funding for her efforts in Ecology came from a small Catalytic Grant to Dr. Spencer and two colleagues from other schools to build Urban Ecology content into both the Ecology and Biological Principles courses. **Her work on the Catalytic Grant and in Teaching Scholars underscores her commitment to undergraduate instruction.**

Her dedication to student success and impact of students' lives, both in and beyond the classroom, is evident from her work as an academic advisor and her recent counter-plagiarism initiatives in the School of Biology. Dr. Spencer has received the Outstanding Academic Advisor Faculty award in recent years, and leads the School of Biology's academic advising team. Her advising philosophy includes the concept that when we advise students, we are teaching them skills for how to navigate the work environment. She advises over 25% of the Biology majors, which gives her a rapport with them as individuals and insight into their individual academic needs, as well as program-level success issues. Last Fall, she and a colleague uncovered an unfortunate incident involving academic integrity in their course. In response, Dr. Spencer is creating a set of Biology-specific plagiarism activities and guidelines, as well as materials on how to prevent plagiarism from both the faculty and the student perspectives.

Finally, **Dr. Spencer's Georgia Tech citizenship includes making connections between campus and community partners to establish honey bees from the Georgia Tech Urban Honey Bee Project on the BeltLine's Eastside Trail, an introduction that occurred at the Ecology Service-Learning Project poster session last fall.** In addition, she has served on the Faculty Senate, CETL's Learning Catalytics pilot program, CETL and CAS search committees, the College of Sciences Diversity Council, and the School of Biology Undergraduate Curriculum Committee, the Undergraduate Awards Subcommittee, and the Introductory Biology Committee. She also

participates in the School of Biology's undergraduate recruitment and retention efforts. She was co-founder of the Grapes of Wrath book club and still participates regularly. She and Dr. Linda Green put on a series of workshops introducing the Fundamentals in Scientific Teaching to the School of Biology faculty, and gave a condensed version to the College of Sciences Faculty Mentoring Program last fall.

Because of her dedication and creative approaches to teaching and learning, her attention to student learning outcomes, and her desire to build collaborative connections with campus and community partners, to I am pleased to nominate Dr. Chrissy Spencer for the Geoffrey G. Eichholz Faculty Teaching Award.

Sincerely,

Terry W. Snell

Terry W. Snell, Professor and Chair
School of Biology

310 Ferst Drive | Atlanta, GA 30332
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Georgia Institute of Technology
School of Biology • 310 Ferst Drive • Atlanta, GA 30332

30 January 2015

Dear Esther and the CETL Awards Committee,

I truly love taking time to reflect back on my time at Georgia Tech. The intensity of my approach to teaching tends to leave me strapped for time mid-semester, and I'm so busy keeping up with the next assignment, or grading the previous one, or building a new activity that I don't take enough time to step back and observe the whole effect.

In the past year my teaching style has moved further toward student-centered. I discovered Team-Based Learning and fell in love, then tried it and realized it would take more than I could give on short notice. My CETL and Biology colleagues have been very helpful in helping me find a way to glean a part of the whole from TBL, even while admitting that it's probably an all-or-none approach. It's on the back burner this spring, but I hope to re-invigorate it for Fall semester.

Completing a full draft of the Biological Principles (BIOL 1510) Learning Objectives was such a relief, and really opened my attention to the partially built website content (at bio1510.biology.gatech.edu) for the flipped version of BIOL 1510. As we add learning objectives to the website, it creates incentive to locate or create other non-copyright course materials for our students. This is a fun and on-going project that creates an open-source and free resource we make available to our colleagues.

At the Biology Leadership Conference last year I linked in with two Ecologists colleagues, both from Pennsylvania, and we received a small Catalytic Grant to foster collaboration on the creation of Urban Ecology-themed classroom materials for Biological Principles (BIOL 1510) and Ecology (BIOL 2335). The grant's theme was flexible, so I worked on creating Urban Ecology service-learning projects while my colleagues have been developing small in-class activities. I was impressed at how many students in my Ecology course had never done a field project, and how much they seemed to enjoy being outside doing research, even if the task was sometimes daunting for them.

Learning Catalytics has been an amazing new tool that I started using last spring. It allowed me to take the TBL approach in Ecology, it's transformed the types of in-class work we can do in BIOL 1510. I love these technologies that allow me to be creative and seem to make my large class feel small. These tools allow me to keep trying new project ideas and technique to keep the material fresh and interesting for myself, and hopefully make the experience more interesting for my students.

I continue to be reminded of why I value this job so highly. I appreciate receiving the School of Biology's nomination for this award, and hope that I continue to grow in my appreciation for student learning and the best teaching practices that accompany good student learning.

Chrissy Spencer

Chrissy Spencer, PhD
Academic Professional
Georgia Tech School of Biology

Eichholz Faculty Teaching Award Nomination – 2015 –Teaching Excellence and Impact – Chrissy Spencer

1) Student videos

Student videos to explain scientific papers from my sections of BIOL 1510 in S12, S13, and S14. This project format has been adopted by all BIOL 1510 instructors.
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L-Kjol_GM7Q
http://youtu.be/HMRbZVB-mDI
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ImoWCJDpPS0
http://youtu.be/5JUFfIXxR30

Student videos from Evolution (BIOL 3600) to explain evolution concepts (and published literature) to a High School level audience. Each video has peer-ratings and peer-feedback in the comments below. Video archive: bio3600.biology.gatech.edu

2) Student posters
Sample posters from Honors Genetics Lab (2355 F14 Bee Genetics) and Ecology Service-Learning Projects (2335s) downloadable at
www.dropbox.com/sh/wf0v81idzkx73sk/AABqM77g76DMe7WTI3DDcDECa?dl=0

3) Anonymized Student Comments from Service-Learning project evaluation
"great group! had a great time with these kooky kids! group projects often get a bad rap because of sour experiences, but this project went on the opposite, positive end of the spectrum, reminding us just how enjoyable it can be to work with people. regardless of how you think these projects turned out from a scientific and academic standpoint, i can promise you that they were personally a success in the social aspect"

"This was a good project that provided the opportunity to get some experience collecting real-world data and putting it together into a project, and the poster session was fun!"

"I really enjoyed learning about bird watching during the course of the project. I actually found it quite peaceful and a good break to spend some time outside.... Overall, I thought this was a great alternative to the traditional learning style of home works. Having interned several times within my major, I believe practical, hands on learning is the most effective way to learn therefore I really enjoyed this."

"Our research got data!!!! Yay!!!"

"I really enjoyed this class!"

"Some times I felt like I had to push the group forward to a deadline, but overall good project experience"

4) Samples of Learning Objectives from BIOL 1510

2.01 Introduction to Ecology; Major patterns in Earth's climate

1. Define ecology and describe the major sub-disciplines: behavior, population ecology, community ecology
2. Recognize the temperature and precipitation profile for 6 terrestrial biomes and the ocean biome
3. Explain the physical features of Earth that cause patterns in atmospheric and ocean circulation and lead to discrete regions of climate (temperature and precipitation patterns) with associated plant and animal communities (e.g. biomes)
4. Predict how changes in climate can alter species ranges and biome locations (climate change effects)

4.02 Mendelian Genetics

1. Know and use the vocabulary needed to discuss genetic inheritance including gene, allele, dominant, recessive, gamete, genotype, phenotype, homozygote, heterozygote, carrier

2. Explain how chromosomal separation at meiosis leads to segregation of alleles in gametes
3. Explain how alignment at metaphase results in independent assortment of (unlinked) genes
4. Construct and use a Punnett square for a single trait and for two traits using appropriate terminology
5. Determine possible offspring types and phenotypic ratios using probability rules

5) Teaching Video – Teaching with Chili Peppers
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5wg1fR6Fv2Q&feature=share&list=PLE7C957F167F93126&index=13
This short video explains the teaching "tidbit" on evolution that my team at the Southeast Summer Institute created in Summer 2012. Filmed by Jennifer Leavey, it showcases student interactions in the classroom and includes a brief interview with a group of students as they have their "Aha!" moment about the concepts conveyed by the activity. We use this lecture activity regularly in BIOL 1510, and other instructors have adopted it.

6) Selected Conferences, Presentations, & Professional Development
- Class of 1969 Teaching Scholars Program 2014-15, Center for Teaching and Learning at Georgia Tech, Atlanta, GA.
- Catalytic Grant to build Urban Ecology activities for Introductory Biology and Ecology
- Southeast Regional PULSE Institute 2014, Richmond, VA
- CETL Course Design Studio 2014, Georgia Tech, Atlanta, GA
- Biology Leadership Conference 2014, Amelia Island, FL
- 2013 PKAL Atlanta Regional Network Fall Meeting, Georgia Tech, Atlanta, GA. Session Organizer and Presenter, Organizing Committee Member.
- Tech Gets Medieval Symposium, 2012, Georgia Tech, Atlanta, GA. Presented a teaching example from BIOL 1510 that uses modern human evolutionary genetics and making links back to the Black Death in Medieval Europe.
- Evolution Meeting 2012, Ottawa, ON, Canada. Poster Presentation: Piazza, an on-line learning community, used in large lecture courses to support student learning and in-class engagement.
- Association for Biology Laboratory Education 2012 Conference, Chapel Hill, NC. Participant.
- Southeast Summer Institute 2012, Athens, GA. (Team development of Chili Pepper activity)
- 2011 Panelist, Meeting of the Hesburgh Fellows, Center for Teaching and Learning, Georgia Tech, Atlanta, GA.
- Class of 1969 Teaching Scholars Program 2011-12, Center for Teaching and Learning at Georgia Tech, Atlanta, GA.
- Grapes of Wrath Faculty Book Club – Fall 2011 to present

7) Thank-a-Teacher notes selected from various semesters
Spring 2013 – BIO 4697: "You have always went above and beyond to offer your guidance and assistance, and have truly enhanced my Georgia Tech experience I have enjoyed having the opportunity to work more closely with you this year from 4697 and I am grateful for all of your advice regarding reaching. Thank you so much for all that you do!"

Spring 2013 – BIOL 1510: I would just like a send a short letter of gratitude for you as a professor. You demonstrate the qualities I admire in a teacher, which honestly are rare to find all in one person. You have been passionate, engaging, accessible, and fair. I appreciate your efforts in lecture. I can only ponder how hard a morning lecture audience can be—you are basically expected to put on a one-woman show! You, however, take the opportunity to engage students with questions and activities and your passion for biology and a certain care for presenting the material comes across during that hour and the positive effects on my learning remain. You truly make a difference through teaching. Thank you!"

Fall 2012 – BIOL 1510: "I just wanted to say thanks for being such an engaging professor! You have a rare, energetic positivity that doesn't often radiate from professors at this school, and it put me in a good mood to learn biology every lecture. I've always like biology and so far I feel like I've learned a lot of really cool stuff. This is a heartfelt thanks from one of the quiet back-row kids!"

Fall 2011 – BIOL 1510: "I took honors bio during my high school freshman year and while we covered much of the same material and even used the same textbook, I learned so much more from your class. Additionally, it was much more interesting. I am confident that it will stick w/ me more than high school's did."

Fall 2010 – BIOL 1511: "Thank you for a wonderful first semester! I learned so much from your class and I am confident that I now have a solid foundation for my upper level biology classes. My favorite topic of the class as your unit about genetic and cystic fibrosis..."

Georgia Institute of Technology

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January 29, 2015

Dr. Esther Jordan
Center for Enhancement of Teaching and Learning

Dear Dr. Jordan:

I am delighted to support the nomination of my colleague and co-instructor, Dr. Chrissy Spencer, Academic Professional in the School of Biology, for the Eicholz Faculty Teaching Award. I have had the genuine pleasure of co-teaching Biol 1510 Introductory Biological Principles, for three-plus semesters (Fall 2010, Fall 2011, and Fall 2012, and this current Spring 2015 semester), with Dr. Spencer. We attended nearly all of each other's class sessions, so I have first-hand knowledge of Dr. Spencer's teaching excellence.

Biol 1510, with enrollments of over 200 students, was Dr. Spencer's first experience teaching a class larger than about 25 students. She rose to the challenge magnificently. She projected energy and enthusiasm in the large lecture hall. She learned how to use clickers for both in-class formative assessment and for exams. She never let technical problems (dead projector, dying microphone, etc.) appear to faze her, overcoming and sidestepping such issues with grace and infectious humor.

Most importantly, she rapidly and radically adapted her teaching from year to year to become far more student-centered, with active learning as the core principle. She started in Fall 2010 with mostly lecture interspersed with occasional clicker questions, and now she has activities to engage students in every class session. She borrowed, adapted, and created some of her own in-class case studies for students to explore and learn not just the basic concepts, but their interconnections and applications. She revised the group projects in the course to have students make videos and post them on YouTube and the class web site, with peer viewing and evaluation. These were highly successful, with some very creative videos explaining recently published research on course topics.

Besides Biol 1510, Dr. Spencer has converted Biol 2345 Genetics Laboratory from majority computer simulations to a hand-on wet lab experience. She leads Biol 2355 Honors Genetics Laboratory students through a project-based investigatory laboratory experience using her own research system, experimental evolution in Escherichia coli bacteria, to explore basic genetics questions, and thereby cover basic genetics techniques. In Biol 2400 Math Models in Biology, students engage in group problem-solving throughout the semester and model a biological question in a final group project. Her most recent efforts center on "flipping" the core Biol 2336 Ecology course, using Learning Catalytics for pre-class assignments and also for in-class group activities. She has obtained a small grant from Pearson to build in-class activities in Urban Ecology, in collaboration with colleagues from other universities. She has also developed

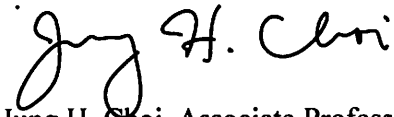
service-learning projects for the Ecology Laboratory with community partners including TreesAtlanta, ArkFab, and the GT Urban Honeybee Project.

In all of her classes, Dr. Spencer brings a student-centered approach. She coaches struggling students to improve their study habits. In Biology 1510, she organized and met with a group of student representatives for mid-course focus-group type evaluations and discussions regarding any student issues and ways to improve the student learning experience.

Dr. Spencer has become a leader of the community of teacher-scholars in the School of Biology. She attended the 2012 National Academies Regional Summer Institute. This is a week-long workshop where faculty from research universities learn about Scientific Teaching, active learning, mentoring and assessment. They practice backwards design by developing a teaching module complete with learning objectives, formative and summative assessments, and student-centered learning activities. She and Dr. Linda Green put on a series of workshops the following academic year for Biology faculty and postdocs about Scientific Teaching and active learning. Dr. Spencer also tutors and mentors both undergraduate and graduate teaching assistants in our Biol teaching assistant courses. Moreover, she gently mentors new and more senior tenure-track faculty with whom she co-instructs. Faculty who have co-taught with her have told me that they learned much from her, and have themselves adopted active-learning strategies.

Because of her dedication and focus on student-centered teaching and learning, and the visible positive impact she has made on Biology faculty teaching, I proudly support the nomination of Dr. Chrissy Spencer for the Eicholz Faculty Award.

Sincerely,



Jung H. Choi, Associate Professor
Director of Teaching Effectiveness for the School of Biology

Linda E. Green, Ph.D.
School of Biology
310 Ferst Dr
Atlanta, Georgia 30332-0230 USA
Linda.green@biology.gatech.edu

January 29, 2015

To the Selection Committee,

I am delighted to write on behalf of Chrissy Spencer, our School of Biology nominee for the CETL Eichholz Award. Chrissy is completing her fifth year on the faculty at Georgia Tech. Chrissy has helped to implement curriculum improvements in multiple courses, contributes to the Georgia Tech community as the advisor to two student organizations, and consistently seeks out ways to improve the academic advising within and outside of the School of Biology. She is a valuable asset to our School and Institute.

Chrissy's creativity and strengths in diverse pedagogical approaches have helped to transform our introductory biology course. She has developed new in-class problem-based activities for our 200+ Bio I course, as well as established a new technologically-savvy approach to the cumbersome and admin-intensive group project assignment that exists in both Bio I and II courses. Chrissy has developed materials for the BIOL 1510 curriculum that involve peer-to-peer activities and incorporate classroom technology, such as the tablet-surface convenience of notating on the slides in response to student input.

She regularly incorporates local and regional professional development opportunities into her schedule to continue to brainstorm and learn about new methodologies that can be incorporated into our program. In particular, she has recently proposed with two other intro bio faculty to author a textbook-free set of resources for BIOL 1510. If funded, this grant will invigorate the classroom activities by ensuring elements of a "flipped" framework are readily used in the course.

Chrissy has implemented new pedagogical approaches to improving student learning in every course she has undertaken. She has become involved in our TA pedagogical training course, developed new units of problem-based learning in our Math Models in Biology curriculum, revised our regular and honors genetics laboratory curriculum to include more inquiry-based and project-based units, and taught a 60-seat core Ecology lecture course using a modified problem-based learning approach. Chrissy has adapted to multiple teaching approaches held by a variety of co-instructors across these courses. She has been tapped for her mentoring capabilities in co-teaching with new faculty for the past several semesters.

As you can see, Chrissy is highly valued by the faculty and students in the School of Biology for the positive impact she has had on our curriculum and students' lives. She is continually working on curriculum development and revision across our courses. She has collaborated with me to develop a faculty book group with CETL, bringing together faculty from across campus to share teaching experiences. We have also co-led a series of workshops for the School of Biology faculty and postdocs on the principles of scientific teaching. Chrissy is passionate about sharing her experiences in the classroom with other faculty, and helping more colleagues find the enjoyment and create the impact that Chrissy experiences in her courses. I believe Chrissy is an excellent choice for the Eichholz Faculty Award.

Sincerely,

Linda E. Green, Ph.D.
Senior Academic Professional, School of Biology
404.385.6517

Dear Sir/Madam,

On behalf Dr. Chrissy Spencer's nomination of the Eichholz Award, my name is Britney Lewis and I am a 4th year graduating senior from the Georgia Institute of Technology School of Biology. During my time at Georgia Tech, Dr. Spencer has instructed 3 courses toward my curriculum and served as my academic advisor. I have enjoyed working with her over the past four years as a TA and as her student, and I am well aware that my successes as a student at this institute are rooted in her guidance and excellence in teaching.

In my early years at Georgia Tech, my interactions with Dr. Spencer were mostly in the classrooms of Intro to Biology 1510 and Biological Math Models 2400. In both of these classes Dr. Spencer required a deep level of engagement and understanding from her students that were vital to being successful in her class. In her seminar class for Center for the Enhancement of Teaching & Learning, I learned that this level of engagement was a part of "active learning". This strategy of teaching places the responsibility of learning on students by requiring problem solving and high order thinking. In this way Dr. Spencer has taught me and other students not only objective information about the subject matter but also how to challenge and to take ownership of our understanding. Through these methods of teaching, as freshman and sophomore students we also learned how to teach ourselves and how to push towards inquiry based learning methods.

Dr. Spencer has also guided me towards being proactive and towards using inquiry based learning to discover different academic and career options. For example, although I am very interested in studying Biology at Georgia Tech, my interests spill into other fields of study and to other organizations across campus. Dr. Spencer and I have mapped the road towards achieving my career goals and academic goals at Georgia Tech so that I may experience all that I am interested in (including Biomedical Engineering and Business & Management), but also so that I would remain successful in my academic and intrapersonal development. Throughout my four years at Georgia Tech I have watched my relationship with Dr. Spencer strengthen as I am able to share the joy my successes in different academic and extra-curricular programs.

Although it may not have been her intentions, Dr. Spencer has encouraged me to push and to take ownership of the path to my success. She has always encouraged me to look for a solution or a path towards my goals and to instead use her as a guiding hand. This has become more evident as I now use her office/advising hours to share my plans with her and to seek her opinion instead of her direction and instruction. I never shy to share my experiences with Dr. Spencer because she maintains a pathway to always be available to help and demonstrated a genuine concern for my achievements. While graduating and leaving the institute is bittersweet I am thankful for the opportunity to have been Dr. Spencer's student and I am excited for the upcoming freshman students who will have an opportunity to do the same. Because of her commitment to her student's development and to teaching Biology I encourage you to consider Dr. Chrissy Spencer as a recipient of the Eichholz Award.

Thank you,

Britney Danielle Lewis
Georgia Institute of Technology
School of Biology | Class of 2015

January 29, 2015

To whom it may concern,

I am writing this letter in full support of Dr. Chrissy Spencer's nomination for the 2015 Geoffrey G. Eichholz Faculty Teaching Award. During my sophomore year, the reservations I had about my chosen major were considerable, and it was then that I enrolled in an introductory biology course, Biological Principles, with Dr. Spencer. Expecting to do nothing more than satisfy another requirement of my core curriculum, I entered the class with indifference, but by the end of the semester, I had found my new major. Dr. Spencer's enthusiasm for biology reminded me that I wasn't at Georgia Tech to just get a degree but to find my passion. Even though there were over 150 students in the class, Dr. Spencer went above and beyond to make sure everyone in that room was challenged to think critically, encouraged to dig deeper, and inspired to ask "why."

My next class with Dr. Spencer, Math Models in Biology, ended up being one of my favorite classes I ever took at Georgia Tech. In contrast to the monotonous, dictation-style lecture often employed in many quantitative classes, she made the class a truly collaborative learning environment. Most days were centered around in-class exercises ("ICEs"), sometimes no more than one or two questions long, that would take me and my fellow group members the entire class period to solve. Dr. Spencer consistently pushed us to work together on advanced applications of what we had learned, time after time illustrating that collaboration can bring about that jolt of insight needed to solve a problem that might have otherwise seemed impossible. This level of critical thinking is rarely achieved in freshman and sophomore level courses.

Needless to say, Dr. Spencer has played a pivotal role in helping me get to where I am today. I say this not because of the years I spent in her classes, but because of her personal investment in my growth as a student. She served as a faculty reader for my Honors Undergraduate Research Thesis, became my unofficial guru for any and all graduate school questions, and was never too busy to sit and talk to me when I came knocking on her door. I can say with great confidence that Dr. Spencer is wholly deserving of this year's Eichholz Faculty Teaching Award.

Sincerely,

Taylor Fischer
School of Biology
Georgia Institute of Technology

Dianna Nord
177 5th Street NW
Atlanta, Georgia 30313

January 29th, 2015

To Whom It May Concern:

I am excited to recommend Dr. Chrissy Spencer for the Georgia Tech Eichholz Teaching Award. Dr. Spencer has positively impacted my undergraduate career at Georgia Tech is many ways and I believe she is extremely deserving of this award.

Dr. Spencer was a co-instructor for my course on Advanced Bioethics Reading in Fall 2013, the first semester this course was ever offered at Georgia Tech. While I was excited that a new bioethics course was being offered, I was nervous to take it since I knew it had never been taught before and I assumed it would be somewhat disorganized and unproductive. However, the class turned out to be very worthwhile and led to some extremely engaging and thought-provoking discussions. I loved the peer-led discussion format of the class because it allowed me and my biology peers to talk to one another about how we really thought bioethical issues played out in the world of science today. I am very thankful that Dr. Spencer structured our class in this non-traditional way. Overall, I loved the course and I felt like I had a closer relationship with many other senior biology students afterwards because we were able to interact with each other every class.

In addition to her teaching, I really appreciate that Dr. Spencer does so much to engage students in the School of Biology. She plays a large role in organizing events for School of Biology students that encourage us to meet one another and feel more like a community. Her enthusiasm for the School of Biology is clear from her commitment to advising, teaching, and being a friend to every student.

Thank you for your consideration of Dr. Spencer for this award. I cannot think of a more deserving professor.

Regards,

Dianna M. Nord
Georgia Tech School of Biology
Undergraduate Student

January 26, 2015

To whom it may concern:

It is my pleasure to express my support for Dr. Chrissy Spencer for this year's EIchholz Award. Dr. Spencer is my biology advisor and was my professor for several courses over the past year. She is a capable and considerate professor who is always willing to meet and speak with her students about coursework or provide school or career advisement. Dr. Spencer excels as an advisor and professor and is a worthy candidate for this award.

As my biology advisor, Dr. Spencer has given me practical and useful advice as I consider my undergraduate and graduate career. Even when I visit her office unexpectedly, she always makes herself available to answer any questions I have. She is receptive and clearly cares about her students, and she is one of my greatest resources at the School of Biology and at Georgia Tech.

Dr. Spencer has a teaching style unlike any professor I have ever had. Rather than following the standard lecture format, she expects students to cover the basic content outside the class and uses class time to implement active learning techniques to address the concepts with which students have the most difficulty. This style might not work for all professors, but students respect Dr. Spencer and are inspired to rise to her expectations because she respects her students and exhibits confidence in the ability of her students to perform well. Her competence and passion for biology set the atmosphere of her lectures and makes the classroom a positive, transparent, and effective learning environment in which students see the benefit of her activities and are excited to see what comes next.

Sincerely,

Alicia Lane

School of Biology

aliciarlane@gatech.edu