

# Application Summary

## Competition Details

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<b>Competition Title:</b>	2020 CTL/BP Junior Faculty Teaching Excellence Award
<b>Category:</b>	Institutional Awards - CTL
<b>Award Cycle:</b>	2020
<b>Submission Deadline:</b>	03/02/2020 at 11:59 PM

## Application Information

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<b>Submitted By:</b>	Eric Schatzberg
<b>Application ID:</b>	4346
<b>Application Title:</b>	Kate Pride Brown
<b>Date Submitted:</b>	03/01/2020 at 11:19 PM

## Personal Details

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### Primary School or Department

School of History and Sociology

<b>Primary Appointment Title:</b>	Chair
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## Application Details

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### Proposal Title

Kate Pride Brown

Nomination Package for Kate Pride Brown  
2020 CTL/BP Junior Faculty Teaching Excellence Award

Contents

- Letter of nomination from Eric Schatzberg, Chair, School of History and Sociology
- A reflective statement on teaching from the candidate
- Illustrations of the candidate's teaching excellence (selected CIOS comments and unsolicited emails)
- Letters of support
  - Laura Bier, Director of Undergraduate Studies, School of History and Sociology
  - Rachel Dekom, undergraduate HTS major
  - Rachel Rigsbee, undergraduate major in the College of Engineering
  - Olivia Mauger, undergraduate joint HTS/CS major
  - Yonatan Weinberg, undergraduate HTS major, class of 2019
  - Katie O'Connell, Ph.D. students, School of City & Regional Planning

February 29, 2020

Selection Committee  
2020 CTL/BP Junior Faculty Teaching Excellence Award  
Center for Teaching and Learning  
Georgia Tech

Dear Members of the Selection Committee

With greatest enthusiasm, I nominate assistant professor Kate Pride Brown for the 2020 CTL/BP Junior Faculty Teaching Excellence Award. As Brown's school chair, I have observed her as a teacher, scholar, and colleague. She has an excellent publication record, does more than her share of department service, and excels as a teacher. I expect her to be a shoo-in for tenure.

The School of History and Sociology combines the two disciplines of history and sociology with a focus on science, technology, and the environment, as well as issues of inequality, race, and social justice. Brown is a sociologist with specialization in environmental studies. Her work is primarily qualitative with a historical component, making her a perfect fit for the School's programs. She arrived at Georgia Tech from a two-year postdoc and with limited teaching experience. In the past four years, she has taught five different courses ranging from a graduate seminar to a large introductory lecture course, while publishing high-quality work at a rapid pace.

Here is a quick overview of her courses. Most important is SOC 1101, Intro to Sociology, which she has taught three times. This is a core course for the School, taught every semester, that typically enrolls 150 to 170 students. Like most courses in the School, it fulfills the Core Area E requirement. The course is not, however, a required course, and we depend on excellent teaching to maintain high enrollments. She taught HTS 3055, Globalization in the Modern Era, five times. This is a mid-level course and part of our major in History, Technology, and Society. She taught HTS 6001 three times; this is a required graduate seminar for our M.S and Ph.D. students in History and Sociology of Science and Technology. And she has taught two more courses once each, first our long-dormant undergraduate course in social theory (HTS 3102), and a special topic course in environmental sociology. She intends to develop environment sociology into a regular course offering.

Her performance has been excellent in every type of class. Although CIOS scores are a poor measure of student learning, her scores are very high. On the question of overall instructor effectiveness, she has an enrollment-weighted average of 4.64 and a simple average of 4.71. These figures are excellent for a relatively new teacher, especially in light of the well-documented prejudice against female instructors in student evaluations of teaching.

Even more impressive are the student comments, which are peppered with superlatives. Brown includes five pages of selected CIOS comments in her nomination packet, after less than four

years of teaching. And this selection does not include all her accolades. Here is a comment she did not include, from summer 2019 for HTS 3055, Globalization in the Modern Era:

Dr. Brown is a phenomenal professor. She has mastered the balance between being personable and being professional, and it was a joy to be a part of this course on a subject about which she is so passionate. She pushes students to improve in writing, reading comprehension, discussion, and presentation, and she clearly cares very deeply about her students and their academic journey. I will certainly recommend her future courses to my peers!

Her letters from students and unsolicited emails support this assessment. In particular, students repeatedly stress the clarity of her presentation, her enthusiasm for the material, and her devotion to her students. She creates an open and welcoming atmosphere in the classroom, making sure that students feel respected. She encourages students to contribute by sharing her own stories, which makes students feel comfortable opening up about their experiences.

This welcoming atmosphere extends beyond the classroom, as the students letters make clear. Students seek her out during office hours, not just to make sure that they understand the course materials, but also for mentoring. Rachel Dekom, for example, notes that "the most meaningful interactions I have had with Dr. Brown have been outside of a classroom." Similarly, Olivia Mauger stresses her interactions with Brown outside of class. "I always left her office feeling empowered and comforted in knowing there was someone rooting for me."

Brown's reflective statement on teaching shows that she bases her success in teaching on sophisticated pedagogical self-understanding. This is probably the best teaching statement I have ever read, one that avoids platitudes and jargon. The idea of the "sociological imagination" is taken from the book of that name by C. Wright Mills, an author who emphasized the need for social scientists to communicate clearly. To this idea, Brown adds a focus on narrative as a way to connect emotion and scientific understanding through storytelling. She consciously seeks a "narrative arc" for the entire course, creating intellectual coherence rather than disconnected topics. But this narrative is not an end in itself. Through stories, Brown helps students truly grasp the abstract concepts of sociological theory.

In summary, Brown is a rising star in the School of History and Sociology, a brilliant teacher, very productive and innovative scholar, and a dedicated provider of service. She is truly deserving of the CTL/BP Junior Faculty Teaching Excellence Award.

Sincerely,



Eric Schatzberg  
Professor and Chair

Teaching Reflection  
Kate Pride Brown

In my four years at Georgia Tech, I have taught a wide variety of courses: large surveys with nearly of 180 students, mid-sized lectures of 40 students, small seminar-style undergraduate classes that delve deeply into specific topics, and required seminars for graduate students. From the engineer who seeks to meet a distribution requirement to the dedicated specialist pursuing a PhD, my students come from diverse places and have unique goals. It has been my privilege to help them meet those goals, no matter what the setting, by providing them with intellectual challenge, rigorous expectations, and deep respect. Moreover, I offer my students a real skill that will serve them well no matter where they go in life. Specifically, I teach them the “sociological imagination,” by which they can better understand and interpret the social conditions that influence human activity wherever it occurs. Sociological imagination is the ability to look at a particular circumstance and see the imprint of general social tendencies, and, vice versa, to learn about broad social trends and understand how they might impact an individual life.

Few of my students aim to become professional sociologists; but the study of sociology is nevertheless beneficial to everyone because it informs a habit of mind encapsulated by the sociological imagination. Human societies are more than the sum of their parts, and no matter what our individual hopes and dreams, our lives are necessarily shaped by the actions of others, as well as the institutions in which we are all embedded. Sociology provides empirical facts about the human world, but these facts alone cannot teach students to make use of them in their own lives: to help them succeed in their careers and to become effective citizens. Information by itself does not provide a sociological imagination. How, then, might one best convey this vital skill? I have found success by utilizing the power of story.

Human beings are creatures of narrative. Throughout human history, people have been story-tellers. Anthropologists and folklorists have copious collections of tales told, re-told, re-imagined, re-purposed, shared again and again, diffusing from one region to another, and from one century to the next. Prior to the written word, lengthy songs and epic poems were more than entertainment for our ancestors during their long, dark nights or impossibly rainy days. The stories they told tethered the group to a common cultural stock. They provided a shared understanding to help members make sense of the world as they encountered it. Just as people have done for millennia, I continue to rely upon the age-old technique of story-telling to build a shared understanding among students in the classroom.

When listening to a story, we feel compelled by the question, “What happens next?” We develop emotional, affective ties to its characters. And the lessons in a story are taken to heart. After a single encounter, we can often remember a story’s plot better than we might recall a new abstract scientific principle or fact. In a scientific discipline such as sociology, it is obviously the latter information that matters most. But just because scientific knowledge is gained using impersonal and rational methods does not mean that it must be taught impersonally and rationally. There is no need to convey scientific learning in a manner that is devoid of humanity. Quite the contrary, we learn best when our humanity is engaged. That is the trick that all scientists must master: we must *feel* the importance of scientific methods in order to successfully develop the rational disposition that allows us to utilize them.

It is my goal to help my students to feel the importance of the knowledge that sociology can produce and come to value the rational methods that provide us this information. In my mind, this value is particularly important in the social sciences. The subject matter of sociology

comprises our lives, our communities, our countries and everything we do. As I often say, “If people are doing it, then you can study it.” But individuals are often loath to apply a rational-scientific lens to their own lives. We have strong feelings and beliefs that come from our upbringing and life experiences, and these modes of explanation matter to us much more than what an “expert” might say. But through the power of story, we can come to a place where scholarship about the human world matters to us, also. We can find a new story to tell ourselves about our lives, our experiences, our communities and our place in the world – and that new narrative will include the knowledge and power that come from sociological understanding.

That is my goal, but how does that happen? There are number of ways that I seek to bring humanity to sociological knowledge. First and foremost, I do not teach using textbooks, even for my introductory classes. While textbooks are useful repositories of information, they are too comprehensive to activate the sense of empathy that I seek to inspire in my students. More often than not, I assign books. Ethnography and qualitative historical sociology offer rich descriptions of the cases at hand, transporting readers to different times and places. They tell embodied stories that also illustrate sociological theories and concepts. I do not neglect quantitative sociology in my classroom, but I am more likely to present this information myself in lecture as a supplement to the more personal and engaging text that I have assigned.

I also aim for each class session to have an underlying narrative structure. Whatever the topic at hand, there is usually some story waiting to be told. Either there is a theory with potentially profound implications, or there is a set of social conditions that have had transformative historical legacies. Each class is not simply an encounter with new knowledge and new ideas, but a story about what these ideas mean and how they might matter. I would like the students to be on the edge of their seats, trying to anticipate what comes next in each day’s class, until the discussion reaches its climax and resolution with the main ideas of the day. Meanwhile, my syllabus also contains a narrative arc, whereby each new idea or new subject builds upon, and is in conversation with, whatever we have studied before. By the end of the semester, I would like the students to be able to think of the entire course as a story that they can recount to themselves. In so doing, it is my hope that they will better retain the knowledge that they have acquired and, what is more, that they will be better prepared to synthesize new knowledge by utilizing the narrative structure that the course provided.

In classes themselves, I will often draw upon anecdotes, from my life or from people I know, to illustrate a concept that has been more scientifically established. While I impress upon my students that just because something happened to me or to you does not make it epistemologically valid in sociology, there are trends that can be shown empirically in aggregate that also can be found in one’s everyday life. Thus, I make myself a living example for investigation. By sharing these stories, I accomplish three goals. First, I make what might otherwise seem an abstract concept now suddenly relatable and important, because students can see it operating in my own life. Second, I illustrate for them the “sociological imagination,” which is the ability to see how the unique story of one individual can relate to a more general trend or tendency in society. Finally, by making myself vulnerable to tell tales from my own life, I make the classroom a safer space for sharing. Students become more willing to talk about their own observations, to share their thoughts about the subject matter at hand, or to publicly practice using the sociological imagination themselves.

This active student participation that the use of story can yield is critical, in my mind, because it changes the relationship between students and the subject. The practice of learning shifts from passively receiving information to commanding knowledge first-hand. When students

engage in these discussions, they come to own the ideas they are encountering. Once they have actually taken an idea, applied it, challenged it, and utilized it, then the concept is no longer abstract. It is a living theory that they have claimed as their own by having wrestled with it.

For this method of teaching to succeed, it is necessary to treat students with deep respect. They must feel the classroom to be safe for experimentation with ideas. Growing in knowledge is an uncertain time; if students are afraid that they will be shamed or dismissed for saying something that is off-the-beaten-track, then they will hesitate to take intellectual risks. Instead, they might choose to use their mental powers to try to find out “what the professor wants” and fixate on the “right” answer. I endeavor to create in the classroom a space that is safe for intellectual experimentation by treating each student with respect and meeting them where they are at, to the best of my abilities. In addition to listening and responding carefully in class, I provide ample feedback on written assignments and devote abundant attention to students in office hours.

However, feeling safe does not preclude feeling challenged. In fact, one of the ways that I show students my respect for them is to ensure that all of them are challenged. No one, not even the brightest, escapes a discussion in my classroom without being pressed to think harder or to try out a different angle or lens. I set high standards, but my expectations are not oppressive. I merely ask that, no matter where students are in their unique academic journey, they take intellectual engagement with the seriousness it deserves. I ask this no less of myself.

Teaching at Georgia Tech has been one of the great joys of my life. Our students are fantastic, and I am honored to play a role in their growth and intellectual development. As a sociologist at a technological institute, I think my greatest offering is to provide the sociological imagination to the young people who will be designing our future. Georgia Tech students will be tomorrow’s global citizens, and what they do will have impacts that may reverberate around the world. If I can help them to acquire a habit of mind that pays attention to our interconnectedness and to the social implications of their endeavors, then I can also help build the future and make a difference in this world, too – one lecture hall at a time.

## APPENDIX A: Selected CIOS comments, arranged by theme

### ***Challenges Students***

She is passionate about the subject and her students, articulate in explaining the subject matter, welcomes ideological pushback and questions her students' most strong-held beliefs so that they explore them further. She expects a lot and her students feel compelled to deliver.

This course took the most effort of any of my graduate courses to date. I felt that the effort I put in made a huge difference and that I learned a great deal in the course.

I learned so much that I had no clue I was ignorant about; this course truly opened my mind.

This is the most mind-opening class I have taken so far in college!

I really enjoyed Dr. Brown's lectures. She is so smart and passionate about sociology and she made me think about different aspects of society from different perspectives that I hadn't before.

Professor Brown did a great job of drawing in real life examples and asking us to think critically about how society shapes us and the institutions governing us.

She is clearly very passionate about her subject. I was forced to think about the world differently and contemplate issues I previously had no idea existed.

### ***Builds Global Citizens***

I was expecting a more technical course that involved a lot more memorizing, but instead this class offered more thought-provoking and eye-opening content... I was not disappointed in learning more about the world and its multitude of societal issues as well as their histories. Tangentially related, this class did help me feel more confident in myself when talking to strangers or other professionals in any field simply because I feel I have gained a more holistic view of the world and more "overall knowledge."

Loved the class. I feel as if it should be mandatory for all students (and faculty). I think it helps people understand their situation relative to others, and how to be a generally more aware being in society.

Was extremely eye opening. I feel like I am leaving this course with a much greater self-awareness than I originally began with. Dr. Brown has a ton of energy, is very respectful, and is completely devoted to teaching you as about sociology and society as possible.

The class taught me so much about globalization, but also introduced me to several sociological concepts, writers and scholars as well. I loved that we had to engage with current events for the writing assignments because it forced me to stay engaged with the news throughout the semester. Overall, I feel much more informed about the state of the world and my ability to influence it.

I learned so much and it helped me become more educated on why current issues are occurring. This class led to me having great conversations and discussions about different controversial issues with my parents.

### ***Facilitates Discussion***

Dr. Brown facilitates discussions better than any professor I have ever taken. She makes a point of challenging your beliefs without jumping down your throat. She is very good at making you look at issues from different perspectives. She is also very understanding and helpful with assignments and projects. 10/10 professor.

I really enjoyed the professor's enthusiasm towards the subject. Every day in class, the professor would come prepared to facilitate high level discussions while intertwining her own personal experience into the topic at hand.

Amazing discussions.

I really enjoyed Dr. Brown's free-form lecture approach to teaching the class. Her presentation of the material was never too busy or overwhelming and her lecture always makes the students THINK and encouraged open discussion between students. I have always loved reading for leisure and I genuinely loved the reading assignments we had for homework. In all honesty I never considered the readings for class "homework" as I could completely see myself reading this material outside of class for fun!

She lectures in an almost story telling format rather than just giving out facts, which really helps me as a student to learn the information. It makes the people we're learning about seem more relatable.

I always looked forward to this class. Even though it was in a big lecture hall, we still had great discussions.

Professor Brown does an exceptional job at providing an engaging and non-textbook lecture that helps me retain information due to its similarity to a discussion rather than an info dump.

### ***Respects Students***

The professor's unbiased views were much appreciated (she never involved politics or allowed anyone to disrespect a particular belief) and she had a huge amount of respect towards everyone. She was very passionate towards the topic and the class and tried to engage the class by asking questions, etc. I did not look at the clock once when I was in the class.

Feedback on assignments was great and I liked how you related course topics to current events. I also thought you did a really good job of keeping the political discussions that occurred in class mostly central which I know is difficult in these times, but I appreciated being able to have level-headed political discussions.

[She made] sure not to let personal beliefs interfere with teaching about politically sensitive topics.

[Dr. Brown] is extremely knowledgeable about social theory, and throughout the semester, she also mentioned other thinkers who were not on the syllabus (and thus whose readings we were not familiar with). This allowed those who wanted to learn more about a particular topic or intellectual lineage to pursue it in their own time. She helped facilitate discussions and knew when to draw the class's attention back to the topic when we strayed or took too long on a certain point.

### ***Provides Clarity and Feedback***

The instructor is passionate about her teaching and would answer questions thoroughly throughout class time, making sure that each student in the (150 student) course was on the same page. She demanded attention and respect and therefore taught fully.

She is very good at putting the material in context and explaining it in a way people today can understand and engage with. She is also excellent at leading class discussions in a way that allows us enough freedom to explore our ideas but doesn't allow us to get off track, and she corrects our misunderstandings.

She was SO knowledgeable and explained everything until we understood. I swear I could've asked her any question and she would've had an answer. It was awesome, and I really admire her.

The best thing about this class was that she explained things in ways that I really understood -- really thorough.

Dr. Brown is a great lecturer and I thoroughly enjoyed the lectures in this course. She makes understanding complex concepts easier and is patient when a student is still having trouble. Her class was my favorite this semester!

The professor really explained everything thoroughly and was able to tie everything together.

She explained things so well and answered all of our questions very well. She encouraged us to participate in class and responded to our suggestions.

Explaining the subject and, if not clear, explaining it from another point of view.

The course was well-organized, with themes and theorists flowing coherently week-to-week. It was especially clear how the later (and more contemporary) theorists were in conversation with older ones.

Our instructor's amazing ability to provide high levels of feedback on all assignments. Whether it was a reflection paper, or final paper proposal, our professor provided thoughtful responses back to us that helped us in the long run

I highly appreciated Professor Brown's availability and enthusiasm for us seeking consultation when we had questions. This really helped me to better understand the course material and feel value.

The ability to articulate clearly and provide examples spontaneously when questions were asked about concepts.

Professor Brown is very well versed in sociology, so she virtually had the answer or at least information that pointed to an answer to any question we could come up with.

She clearly knew a lot about the subject and was willing to take questions not related to what we were learning just to satisfy the curiosity of students.

she was extremely passionate about the subject matter! she was always willing to work with the students and made herself available to help them. she provided great feedback.

Instructor's Greatest Strength: "Engaging the class and offering exceptional help in office hours."

### ***Engaging and Enthusiastic***

Dr. Brown is great at teaching a class. Her lectures are always engaging and I NEVER find myself "clock-watching." In fact, I often seem to think the class goes by very fast. Even in long discussions I find she is great at holding students' attention and actively engaging us. Her anecdotes and real-life stories also add positively to her lectures.

I always looked forward to this class because the lectures were engaging and eye-opening. It was kind of like "story-telling", and we just get so much relevant information for 50mins.

Dr. Brown is an excellent professor. Her teaching is engaging and it's easy to see that she's genuinely excited about the topic. She readily engages her students in discussion during class and outside of class. I have learned so much from her.

Dr. Brown made each lecture a narrative, and by the end of class, she would help us come to non-obvious but fascinating conclusions about globalization. I appreciated her willingness to answer all questions in depth and to encourage student participation in discussions.

[She] made economics interesting to tech students -- a huge feat.

She really knows sociology and it shows. Also I loved it when she would tell anecdotes and show videos and crazy statistics.

Not only did she know the material inside and out and could do an exceptional job of teaching it, she was SO excited about it! That was one of the things I liked most about the class - her enthusiasm for the material made me want to learn it.

She really knows her stuff. She is so passionate about sociology that it is almost contagious.

Loved the professor. Thought she did a fantastic job and her enthusiasm was evident each and every day. Her passion for her own field certainly made me intrigued to find out more about the subject matter and kept me motivated.

Professor Brown is a fantastic lecturer. I was always excited to go to class and she was always really engaging.

I think Dr. Brown's greatest strength is her knowledge and enthusiasm about the topics.

I appreciate the genuine and immediately evident interest the professor has for the topic. It really makes the material engaging.

This course is unique on Tech's campus in that it focuses exclusively on the social aspects of environmental degradation and sustainability. Dr. Brown is an engaging teacher and facilitates interesting and informative discussions around this important topic.

I felt like this was a very good introduction course, the instructor's enthusiasm was very apparent.

Just Dr. Brown is simultaneously like the nicest person ever and brought things to light that I found so interesting personally. In every lecture I learned something...that I found incredibly informative.

### ***Advocates for the Discipline***

Dr. Brown is obviously extremely passionate about the material she teaches, and leads very engaging lectures every week. I loved her class because it made see the value of investing in sociology.

Professor Brown is an awesome teacher. Taking this class with her has genuinely made me consider minoring in Sociology. She's fantastic.

This course was the highlight of my semester. I was extremely intrigued by the content of course and I definitely intend to pursue upper level Sociology courses

I absolutely LOVED this course. I am actually planning to pursue a minor connected to Sociology now. Dr. Brown was exceptional, and I enjoyed all of our readings as well as the topics we focused on.

Not only was this my favorite class this semester (I'm a first semester freshman), but I will attempt to pursue a minor in sociology because of the impact this class has had on me.

I had a pleasure learning about the material for this course. It was my first Sociology class and I am considering take more Sociology courses with a focus in medicine in the future. Dr. Brown is an excellent orator and I enjoyed listening to her lectures.

One other thing I was really impressed by was her ability to segue from the Current Events presentations, which she had no control over the topics [that] were chosen and when they would be presented, to the day's lesson. Got me thinking, everything in the course must be connected since it's so easy for her to get a specific topic out of a random presentation.

### ***General Commentary***

KPB is an angel sent from heaven to teach us sociology.

Kate Pride Brown is one of the best professors I've ever had.

Thank you for hiring Dr. Brown because she is fantastic.

THIS IS A GREAT COURSE MAKE IT REQUIRED OR HIGHLY RECOMMENDED

Course best aspect: "The professor."

Course best aspect: "Dr. Brown!"

Course improvements: "By cloning another Dr. Brown and have them both teach."

GREAT CLASS!!!! Loved every minute of it.

I have never had a more passionate, engaging, and interesting teacher/professor who truly invests in her students.

Dr. Brown is a super smart lady and I enjoyed her lectures. Very interesting class.

The instructor is amazing for this course!

## APPENDIX B: Unsolicited email comments

As I was looking back on the program one year later, I wanted to thank you for providing a course that challenged the views that I held about global economic politics and encouraging me to take interest in current world events. To this day, I continue to read the news and try to dive deep past the sometimes sensationalized headlines. Your globalization course taught me how to critically analyze dense academic literature in a field I was unfamiliar with. I found I enjoyed it so much that I started reading some academic literature on my own time.

I'm sorry it's taken me so long to tell you how [the conference] went. This week has been very busy! It went SO WELL... Everyone in the room seemed very engaged and I got asked lots of good questions...It was very inspiring, and fun to meet so many people who are interested academically in the same things I am...All in all, it was an amazing experience and I am so grateful that you pushed me to do it. Thank you so much for all of your help and support. I really couldn't have done it without you.

I just wanted to take a moment during the break to thank you for an amazing class. Sociology 1101 was without a doubt my favorite course this semester and I am so happy I decided to take it! I sincerely enjoyed your lectures and the reading assignments that went along with them, preparing for your class never felt like "homework" but rather was something I truly enjoyed learning about. I really appreciate your enthusiasm and passion for sociology and I wanted to thank you for educating the class on such important issues. In all, I am so glad I have discovered the field of sociology this year!...I am very excited to stay connected with the HTS department and expand my "sociological imagination" in years to come. Thanks again, and I hope you enjoy the holidays.

It was really lucky for me to take your sociology course. Also I appreciate to you for answering all my questions although they are not directly related to our course. This class is one of few class that I really enjoyed learning.

I just wanted to say- thank you! I thoroughly enjoyed this class. Being a 4th year ready to graduate, this class was a very nice change from the hardcore engineering classes that I am taking this semester. I admire your style of teaching and aim of educating us all to be the future this world needs.

I'm a CS Ph.D. student at GT. As part of a class requirement, in which I had to learn how a non-CS class is taught, I sat in your Intro to Sociology class today. I wanted to say that your class was very interesting and the material, especially around mass shootings and your own experiences on Facebook talking to people engaged in this debate, was fascinating. It was also the first time I ever sat in a sociology class, which after today I wish I would have done in my undergrad.

Anyway, I wrote this email just to say hi and thanks for a wonderful lecture 😊

February 28, 2020

To the Awards Committee:

It is with great pleasure that I recommend Dr. Kate Pride Brown for a CTL/PB Junior Faculty Teaching Award. She teaches the field of Sociology with a focus on environmental sociology and activism and also has taught several interdisciplinary courses on globalization, Russia and social theory. She regularly teaches Sociology 1101, a core course for the unit which is taught every semester and enrolls 180 students. She is a both a gifted teacher and a caring committed mentor of students.

Dr. Brown's teaching evaluations show her to be an accomplished and effective instructor. Her score for item 10 on the CIOS survey, "Overall Effectiveness," averages 4.8 out of 5.0 across all of her classes, which puts her in the ranks of the best teachers in a unit which consistently gets high scores for teaching. She also ranks highly in "Enthusiasm" and "Respect for Students," which range from 4.7-5.0. In evaluations her students have praised her as "forc[ing me] to think about the world differently and contemplate issues I previously had no idea existed" and for "ma[king] me think about different aspects of society from different perspectives that I hadn't before." One said, "This is the most mind-opening class I have taken so far in college!"

I was able to observe Dr. Brown's teaching on October 18, 2018 and I came away quite impressed with her knowledge of the subject matter and how well she was able to explain complex topics to her students in a relatable and compelling way. The course I attended was Social Theory, which has not been taught in the unit in quite some time. In fact, when Dr. Brown first suggested teaching it, I was skeptical it would get enough students to run. It is a testament to her ability to inspire students and build a constituency for her courses that it did.

In the class I attended, the students were discussing the theorist Max Weber, whom they had already been introduced to over the previous three classes. Dr. Brown began the class with the introduction of a new Weberian concept: the "ideal type." She contextualized this concept within 19<sup>th</sup> century intellectual debates and particularly Weber's attempts to chart a path between historians, who argue for the uniqueness of social phenomenon and positivists who argue that fixed laws govern the social world. She described Weber's ideal type as an abstract concept of society, not real but heuristically useful and can best be understood as a measure one applies to social phenomenon. During this part of the class she consistently tied her lecture back to things the class had discussed previously, to help orient the students.

After about 20 minutes, the class turned to a discussion of the readings and Weber's classification of different kinds of authority. The students asked Dr. Brown to start with bureaucratic authority and she was responsive to that request although it meant changing her lesson plan around. This part of the course was more interactive with Dr. Brown asking the

students questions (and vice versa) which then provided the basis of discussion. This Socratic style was well suited to the size of class and subject matter. One of the several characteristics of Weber's notion of bureaucratic authority is that the personal is meant to be separate from the professional and the students had a lively discussion of what that looks like and debating the applicability of various examples. Not all students participated but the vast majority did and seemed extremely comfortable in Brown's classroom. Discussion went on in a free flowing but coherent way. By the end of class, students had not only covered Weberian types of authority but had been guided deftly into considering deeper, more profound questions. What is the relationship between power and democracy? What can happen when rationalized power is aimed at corrupt or morally bankrupt ends? By the end of class, I felt not only a deeper understanding of Weber but also all of the ways he is applicable and relevant—a testament to Brown's ability to elucidate material without reducing complexity.

In addition to her regular teaching, Dr. Brown has also been active in mentoring undergraduate researchers at a level which exceeds that of many of her tenured colleagues in the School. She has supervised a student thesis over two semesters on cold war travel narratives, she also supervised a recipient of the Dean's Internships and mentored a student whose went on to present the original research she did under Dr. Brown's tutelage at a number of undergraduate conferences.

Overall, I found Dr. Brown to be an outstanding and committed teacher who clearly motivates her students and empowers them to look at the world using new tools and in new ways.

Sincerely,  
Laura Bier  
Director of Undergraduate Studies

February 28, 2020

To the CTL/BP Junior Faculty Teaching Excellence Award Committee:

It is my distinct honor and privilege to recommend Dr. Kate Pride Brown for the Junior Faculty Teaching Award. I cannot imagine what my experience at Tech would have been without the influence and support of Dr. Brown. I have had the pleasure of taking three of her classes: Introduction to Sociology, Environmental Sociology, and Social Theory. Each class has pushed me intellectually and provided me with new skills and opportunities for academic and personal growth. But the best part of being Dr. Brown's student is her unwavering commitment to connecting with and supporting her students. She has been my mentor and friend for several years, and I can think of no one more deserving of this award.

My first experience in Dr. Brown's classroom was Introduction to Sociology. Despite the size of the class (it was a large lecture class with over 100 students), Dr. Brown made an effort to actively engage students in discussion and challenge their thinking. Additionally, by the end of the year, I can confidently say she knew everyone in the class by name and had personal connections with many of us. Her course was my first introduction to the field of sociology, and I enjoyed her class so much that I decided to shift my academic focus from history to sociology.

My next course with Dr. Brown was Environmental Sociology. In contrast to the previous course, Environmental Sociology was a small, discussion-based seminar, and the bulk of the course was devoted to an independent research project. My classmates stuck to traditional literature reviews, but when I expressed interest in engaging in primary research surrounding urban farming in minority communities, Dr. Brown was extremely supportive. She helped connect me with an Atlanta urban farming organization and taught me how to perform ethnographic data collection. I presented my subsequent paper at two research conferences, one at Georgia Tech and one at Emory, both of which she pushed me to attend. This has been my greatest academic accomplishment to date, and I would not have gotten started without Dr. Brown's recommendations and encouragement.

But the most meaningful interactions I have had with Dr. Brown have been outside of a classroom context. Each semester we have not had a class together, she has made an effort to reach out to me to catch up and see how I am doing. We have kept in touch while I was working full time off campus, and even during semesters where one of us was abroad. We meet at least once a semester to chat about research, work, and life. When I told her I had been accepted to an internship she had written me a recommendation for, she actually yelled, "Yay!" and gave me a big hug. I know she cares deeply about both my success and my wellbeing, and at a school as challenging as Georgia Tech, it is extremely reassuring to know that I have someone who is always in my corner.

I know I am not the only student into whom Dr. Brown has invested considerable energy. Many of my fellow History, Technology, and Society majors have expressed how much they have enjoyed being Dr. Brown's students and how engaging her classes are. Older students are quick to recommend her classes to incoming HTS students, especially if they are interested in the

sociology side of the major. She engages her students and cares deeply about their success and wellbeing. I am so happy to be able to nominate her for this award and believe she deserves your full consideration.

Sincerely,

*Rachel Dekom*

Rachel Dekom  
B.S. History, Technology, and Society  
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## Recommendation Letter by Rachel Rigsbee for Kate Pride Brown

To whom it may concern:

Arriving at Georgia Tech, I definitely thought that I already knew plenty about how the world worked. I was a college student now, an adult, I was supposed to know everything. So it was fair to assume that I thought an introductory sociology class wouldn't really broaden my worldview past the vast knowledge my eighteen-year-old brain contained. I knew that there was strife in the world, and that the overplayed phrase 'we live in a society' that plastered pseudo-intellectual conversations with my peers meant something (albeit I had never really grasped what that was). However, Dr. Brown's class truly made my pride in my narrow understanding of the world do a full one-eighty.

I remember her prescribing the class our first book: *Methland: The Death and Life of an American Small Town* by Nick Reding. My initial reaction was *oh god, there's assigned reading*, but upon reading the book I became more and more interested in the topic of sociology. The story felt more like a dystopian novel than a journalist's account of the poor Midwest. Of course, we all know that there are atrocities at large in the world, but facing first-hand accounts of it felt more personal than any passing empathy a news article could give. Further, understanding why these things happen created a burning sensation of anger in the pit of my stomach. I wanted to learn more, to understand how we let this happen.

As I continued going to class, I became more engrossed in the answers that sociologists were searching for. Participating in her class wasn't boring and monotonous math problems, but a vivid discussion as to why the society functions the way it does. She truly made every lecture feel like an investigative adventure, deep diving into our own internalized stigma. Every class, Dr. Brown gave us more insight into problems I didn't even know we had.

I distinctly remember the lecture about school systems and the incredible inability to adequately educate kids. Dr. Brown recounted a few stories of her own childhood, and how the sociological phenomenon we were studying in class affected her entire life. Or when she passingly spoke about how her niece was already professing gender stereotypes at the age of two. I thought it was so interesting how she was able to apply her own knowledge to her everyday life. By the end of the semester, I found myself following in the footsteps of her sociology-professor ways. A classmate would say something like 'I don't like pink,' and suddenly, I was no longer chatting passingly. I was in the deep confines of a sociological review.

I'm so grateful that I had such a knowledgeable and well-versed professor as Dr. Brown. Any question that I had about the information in class, she graciously answered. With the heavy weight of the course material, it would have been easy to feel utterly useless against the massiveness of these issues, but instead, Dr. Brown made us feel hopeful. As engineers, our duty is to innovate to improve the world around us, but the issues we face don't stop at bridge truss structures and physics equations. It contains human lives, and that is an important fact I feel STEM majors can easily lose sight of.

However, thanks to Dr. Brown and her excellent class, I don't think I'll be able to easily forget the intrinsic connection that my actions as an individual play in scope of a bigger picture. All problems are in some aspects a societal problem, especially environmental ones. Now, I know where I fit in as an engineer, and that knowledge is invaluable. She really is a remarkable teacher, and I know I'm not the only one that feels that way. She has not only made me a more worldly and empathetic person, but also every other young adult sitting in her class with me. If ever there was a person who deserved this award, it would be her.

Best Regards,  
Rachel Rigsbee

February 23, 2020

To Whom it May Concern:

My name is Olivia (Livie) Mauger, and I am a first-year HTS major from Columbus, OH. I am writing this letter in support of Dr. Kate Pride-Brown. Last fall, I had the privilege of taking one of her classes, Intro to Sociology. Dr. Pride-Brown not only pushed my thinking within the classroom, but continues to provide invaluable mentorship and personal support that has truly shaped my Georgia Tech experience far beyond her classroom.

Before coming to Tech, I had never experienced a class size greater than 30 people. When I saw that my math and sociology courses had over 200 people in each, I expected to have minimal contact with the professor, and thought I would be mainly listening/taking notes -- not discussing. Dr. Pride-Brown's Intro to Sociology was an exception. I still remember on the first day of class she said, "We will be reading 4 books this semester: 1 about drugs, 1 about meatpacking, 1 about sex, and 1 about gambling." These extremely relevant and often controversial topics, combined with the open environment Dr. Pride-Brown created, made me comfortable to share my thoughts and eager to listen from day one. I looked forward to each lecture because she made us feel like our thoughts and opinions not only mattered, but were important to the course as a whole. Although the majority of the students were not HTS majors, Dr. Pride-Brown always stressed that regardless of our field of study, we all have role in and responsibility to the society we live in.

Dr. Pride-Brown stands behind her words and strives to make GT the best possible experience for her students. I attended her office hours almost every week, usually with a dozen or so questions or points of clarification. Even if it meant going past the designated time, she made sure I did not leave her office without fully understanding the topics we were going over. However, the most impactful conversations were the ones not necessarily about lecture material. I picked her brain about her opinion on Karl Marx/Russia, discussed cultural interactions in schools, learned about her experience in graduate school, and at the same time, she was genuinely interested in what I planned to study in college and beyond. At a time when I wasn't sure if I should pursue both an HTS and CS degree, she not only encouraged me and offered advice, but also wrote a letter of support for my petition to the faculty (in order to officially double major). I always left her office feeling empowered and comforted in knowing there was someone rooting for me.

Even though I am not in her class this semester, we have continued our relationship through unofficial office hours, and I will always be grateful for the way she has invested in me. I cannot think of a more worthy candidate for this award.

Thank you for your time. I would be happy to answer any questions at

Olivia Catherine Mauger



Schatzberg, Eric - #4346