

Application Summary

Competition Details

Competition Title: 2020 Innovation in Co-Curricular Education Award

Category: Institutional Awards - CTL

Award Cycle: 2020

Submission Deadline: 03/02/2020 at 11:59 PM

Application Information

Submitted By: Yevgenya Strakovsky

Application ID: 4386

Application Title: Jenny Strakovsky Nomination: Culture-Driven Career Design Programs at Modern Languages

Date Submitted: 03/02/2020 at 4:07 PM

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Primary School or Department

School of Modern Languages

Primary Appointment Title: Assistant Director of Graduate Studies and Career Education

Application Details

Proposal Title

Jenny Strakovsky Nomination: Culture-Driven Career Design Programs at Modern Languages

Award Nomination: Innovation in Co-curricular Teaching

Nominee: Dr. Jenny Strakovsky, Academic Professional
Assistant Director of Graduate Programs and Career Education
School of Modern Languages, Georgia Tech

Initiatives: Culture-Driven Career Design Programming, Modern Languages

- Global Career Lab
- Career Design for Global Citizenship
- “Culture at Work” Graduate Assistantship Program
- VIP Team: 21st Century Global Atlanta

International House Faculty Directorship

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Overview: Culture-Driven Career Design at the School of Modern Languages

In her role as Assistant Director of Graduate Studies and Career Education, Dr. Jenny Strakovsky has conceptualized and implemented a multimodal suite of programs, available to undergraduates and graduate students both in Modern Languages and campus-wide.

Educational Objectives: As stated in the *Provost's Whole Person Education Initiative*, the advancement of technology, data access, and globalization are increasing the need for “cognitive, interpersonal, and intrapersonal skills,” such as communication and deep creativity. “Often called *T-shaped thinkers*, graduates who have demonstrated abilities in these dimensions are the ones most in demand” ([Provost Initiative I](#)). T-shaped thinkers combine depth in a field such as engineering with “boundary-crossing competencies” that let them move between contexts - between teams, organizations, audiences, and cultures. Adaptability and communication -- key to students’ success in this professional landscape -- are the epicenter of the advanced humanities curriculum.

Dr. Strakovsky’s initiatives in *culture-driven career education* leverage advanced humanities to train students in T-shaped thinking and thus prepare them for the career pathways of the 21st century. They include:

1. **Three culture-driven career design studios** that provide a full cycle of lifelong career planning to BS, MS, and PhD students (self-assessment → career exploration → job advising). These programs train students to combine their STEM education with humanistic expertise, positioning them for leadership roles.
 - a. **Global Career Lab (offered in German)**, piloted as “Global Career Intensive,” career design in a German-immersion environment, with a focus on U.S.-German relations in business and research.
 - b. **Career Design for Global Citizenship**, available campus-wide; students learn to mobilize their language study to develop essential skills that complement their STEM education, and to leverage humanities skills for the job search. Emphasis on grand challenges and UN-SDGS.
 - c. **GMC 6003: M.S. Career Portfolio**, analogous master’s level 2-credit course (Core course in the MS-GMC curriculum; not described in this packet given the focus on co-curricular programs)
2. **Applied humanities labs** that provide hands-on opportunities for BS and MS students to engage in collaborative, interdisciplinary, and applied humanities-based work that connects their liberal arts training to real-world global and local challenges.
 - a. **Culture at Work and Global at Home GRA Programs:** partnership with several campus units to place Modern Languages M.S. students in year-long internships that apply their training to real-world problem-solving (marketing, community development, training)
 - b. **21st Century Global Atlanta (VIP Team):** interdisciplinary student-centered research team combining methods from humanities (qualitative, writing, multimedia) and sciences (lab-based team, applied problem-solving) to understand the role of language and culture in contemporary real-world settings.

Georgia Tech Impact: *Students consistently report that the programs are transformative to their thinking.*

Strakovsky’s programs are personalized and relationship-based, with groups of 10-15 students participating in each program per semester. In two years, over 75 students have completed a full semester-long program, with 33% choosing to complete two or more. Over 200 students have participated in the public events (speakers, workshops).

• Given its success, the Career Design Studio model is now a core course in the M.S. in Global Media and Cultures.

National Impact: *Strakovsky’s approach is nationally unique in the field of Modern Languages.* She has been invited to present these programs at leading national venues: Association of Departments of Foreign Languages (Chairs Seminar 2017 & 2018), American Association of Teachers of German (GA 2018), American Council for Teaching of Foreign Languages (2019), American Association of Colleges and Universities (2019).

Future Plans: Dr. Strakovsky is developing 45-min workshops that can be delivered as a guest lecture, to capitalize on ML’s extensive campus reach (over 50% of undergraduates take a course in ML before they graduate).

Initiative I. Global Career Lab (Pilot: Global Career Intensive)

Global Career Lab (piloted as *Global Career Intensive* in 2018, now funded by the Halle Foundation) is the first program of its kind in the field of language studies, both in the School of Modern Languages and nationally, because it integrates three pedagogical and disciplinary fields into a single approach:

1. The **language immersion** and language acquisition of a study abroad program (*currently: German*)
2. The **in-depth career design** advising typically offered in a career services office
3. A **culture-driven/whole person-based** approach to life planning and lifelong learning

Description of Program:

The *Global Career Lab* provides intensive career design training in the target language and showcase the exciting career opportunities that language study opens up for Georgia Tech students in a variety of fields. Participants learn to leverage German to pursue their major-specific professional goals, meet with STEM faculty and Atlanta professionals to discuss key current issues in science, technology, and business, and prepare a job portfolio in German. *Global Career Intensive 2018* was run as a three-day intensive summer event for incoming freshmen with intermediate-to-advanced German. *Global Career Lab* is now offered as a 1-credit course (3000-level) or a series of 15 workshops, of which the guest speaker events are open to the campus.

At stake in this program is students' understanding of their own role as global citizens. Throughout the program students are asked to reflect on their long-term career goals to understand the role that language, culture, and communication will play in their careers. As future leaders in their fields, students are encouraged to articulate the impact that their work could make in the future world, and to plan their time at Georgia Tech in a way that would foster their own global citizenship and future leadership.

Learning outcomes:

1. Discuss topics in STEM, business, and civil service in German.
2. Understand why foreign language expertise is crucial for our nation and the world today.
3. Create job materials in German, practice networking, do a mock informational interview.
4. Understand differences between German and American work culture.
5. Describe long-term career goals and how they align with skills, interests, and values, as well as how language study fits into these goals; create a 10-year plan in German.
6. Gain understanding of the career resources available at Georgia Tech.

Interdisciplinary Learning and Networking:

Global Career Lab hosts guest speakers from across many disciplines, in a combination of lectures by Georgia Tech STEM faculty and industry professionals. Speakers present in German about a topic in their professional expertise. *This is a symbiotic learning experience for students and speakers:* while students learn field-specific German, speakers experience a humanities classroom and its relevance to their work.

Speakers have included:

- Erika Burk (*Porsche USA*), global business, gender and leadership
- Barbara Heil-Sonneck (*Design2Sell*), small business management
- Markus Rimmele (*Koch Packaging*), medical supply chain and logistics
- Martin Brucherseifer (*Siemens*), engineering solutions
- Patrick Wallace (*Department of Education*), global competence
- Prof. Sven Behrens (*Chemical Engineering*), rheology of foam
- Prof. Natalie Stingelin (*Material Science*), sustainable plastic
- Prof. Michael Nitsche (*Literature, Media, and Communication*), video game design

- Prof. Nepomuk Otte (*Physics*), gravitational wave physics
- Site Visit: multinational German corporation *Grenzebach Inc.*, Newnan, GA (2018)

Nano-Internships in Communications Consulting:

Speakers generally do not have experience presenting in a foreign language classroom. Each student is assigned to a speaker to provide support to translate their content into a presentation that is accessible to non-experts and language learners. Student consultants provide feedback about the vocabulary choices, translate parts of the presentation from English into German, and prepare vocabulary handouts for the group. In this consulting role, students learn to work with a client to translate a presentation (style, content, language) from one cultural and disciplinary context into another. In the pilot, this work was done by TAs; in the current program, participants work in teams, depending on how many students have enrolled in the course.

Evaluation of the Program:

Student evaluations have been extremely positive:

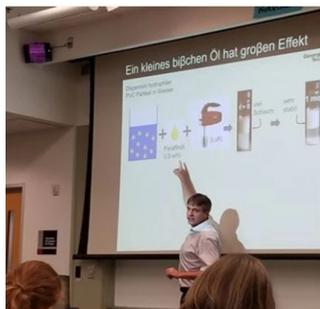
- “I found the variety of speakers successful because it was amazing to see how the German language can be used in a professional atmosphere. I also found the Lebenslauf [*resume*] workshop helpful because I look forward to applying to an internship or research opportunity in German very soon.”
- “My favorite part was Day 2 with the lectures on foam and media. These were very interesting and almost entirely in German which made them quite immersive.”
- “We talked about a lot of German opportunities at GT that I wasn't even aware of.”

*Based on the pilot, Global Career Lab received \$15,000 from the **Halle Foundation** to continue for three years.* The format of the program has been modified to take place during the year, so it can be accessible to a wider number of students. *Global Career Lab* has weekly sessions during the Fall semester, so students who participate in the entire program receive 1 credit of advanced German coursework (3000-level). Events continue in the Spring in conjunction with the student-run *German Club*.

The program also catalyzed strong relationships with campus units and employers. Over half of guest speakers have asked to return to Modern Languages for a second or third visit (in *Global Career Lab*, in another course such as *Business German*, or during campus-wide *German Day*); they have also been enthusiastic about mentoring students after the program and providing internship opportunities.

Pictured:

1. Supply Chain student views operational machinery at Grenzebach.
2. Michael Nitsche speaks about “space” in video games.
3. Natalie Stingelin describes plastic superconductors.
4. Sven Behrens explains oil’s effect on bubble formation.
5. Students meet German-speaking Atlanta professionals.
6. Students meet Grenzebach executives in Newnan, GA.



Initiative II. Career Design for Global Citizenship

Description (from syllabus):

*Experts predict that people in the 21st century will have an average of 5-7 careers over their lifetime. This is a 1-credit co-curricular course that responds to the changing world of work and prepares you to take ownership of your career trajectory. We take a culture-driven approach to career design, teaching you how to navigate career change and enter a professional community. We will learn how work is changing in the information age and how to get started on your path. You will identify your strengths, values, and interests; grow a network specific to your goals, and develop a *Job Search Starter Kit* for lifelong career growth, with a resume, cover letter, and *10-year Odyssey Plan* to put your goals into action.*

Open to any Tech student with intermediate ability in a second language. 1 credit, taught in English.

Educational Contribution: Students will...

- Learn the structure of 21st century careers and consider how college fits into this process.
- Learn how humanities expertise is used in several professional roles and several sectors.
- Articulate their professional mission, work-view, strengths, interests, and values.
- Explain the role of language and cultural competence in their professional field of interest.
- Practice networking and professional self-presentation.
- Develop a **starter kit for lifelong career growth**, which includes a 10-year Odyssey plan and key materials for the next step (e.g. resume, cover letter, networking contacts).

Sample Assignment 1: Global Citizenship in the Field

Taking study abroad as a metaphor for career exploration, students analyze a professional community as a cultural ecosystem. They (1) identify a “wicked problem” in their field, (2) research three companies addressing this challenge, (3) conduct two informational interviews to learn from experts working on the issue, and (4) present their findings, with a focus on the humanities skills relevant to this work. Through this process, they learn to enter a professional community and have a voice in that arena.

Sample Project 2: Career Odyssey Starter Kit (source: *Designing Your Life, Evans and Burnett*)

In this final project, students design and present three possible lives. Each 5-year plan should be detailed as well as distinct: the ability to entertain multiple narratives is a key skill built through this project. Students should address how each plan aligns with their strengths, goals, and priorities. The Starter Kit must include:

- Mission Statement and Personal Logo – cover
- Three 5-year plans (Life A, Life B, Wildcard Life C)
- 10 Year Plan – expand Life A, B, or C
- LinkedIn Profile and/or Resume (student’s choice based on their situation)

Evaluation of the Program:

The course consistently receives above average CIOS ratings. Students have responded very positively to the approach.

One student writes: “I really liked the focus on building a fulfilling pathway...I feel that now, when I walk into an interview, I can give non-generic answers. **I know what I bring to the table and what drives me.**” The course now counts as elective for the *Global Leadership Living-Learning Community* (Office of International Education).

Impact:

- Invited national presentations: Association of Departments of Foreign Languages (Dept chairs’ seminar; 2017, 2018), American Association of Colleges and Universities seminar on Global Citizenship (2019).
- Press Coverage in *Ivan Allen News*, *Daily Digest*, and *The Whistle*:
[“Innovative Career Course Features Cross-Cultural Studies, Importance of Humanities”](#)

Initiative III. “Culture at Work” and “Global at Home” GRA Programs

Program Concept: The cross-cultural humanities traditionally develop skills in writing, design, empathy, ethical reasoning, and complex communication. The *Culture at Work* and *Global at Home* GRA Program puts this humanities training to work and gives graduate students an opportunity to learn how to apply their cross-cultural humanities in real-world settings. Open to graduate students in Modern Languages (M.S. in Global Media and Cultures and M.S. in Applied Language and Intercultural Studies).

Experiential Component: *Culture at Work* and *Global at Home* place GRAs in **nine-month positions** with several campus partners, which include roles in marketing, project management, community engagement, and staff training. The goal of the program is to build students’ essential 21st century skills and teach them how their communication, global competence, empathy, writing, and management abilities can make an impact locally and globally.

- *Global at Home* GRAs work in **Georgia Tech Residential Life** on initiatives related to multicultural programming, staff training, and international student services
- *Culture at Work* GRAs work with **Ivan Allen College, Modern Languages, and the Atlanta Global Studies Center** on communications and program development.
- Partnerships in development: GT-Lorraine, GT Professional Education, Office of International Education

Reflective Component: GRAs complete a training equivalent to a 1-credit course, titled “*Building Community: Culture, Identity, Diversity, Inclusion,*” which includes:

- Survey of the major frameworks and practices in applied humanities: cultural management, organizational behavior, well-being psychology, story-telling, graphic design, videography, diversity and inclusion, institutional research practices.
- Reflection on students’ skill development and career goals, including individual development plans, self-reflective discussions with supervisors, and resume updates

Sample Positions and Projects: (14 positions in pilot year AY19-20)

- *Assistant Coordinator, Training and Development, Residential Life*
Developing an online training on “cross-cultural competence: working with global students” for housing staff
- *Assistant Coordinator, Sustainability in Mental Health, Residential Life*
Conceptualizing a campus-wide film series and workshops on mental health, partnering with local nonprofits
- *Assistant Coordinator, Graduate Marketing and Recruitment, Modern Languages*
Brand development and regional marketing for two graduate degrees, incl. graphic design and events
- *Assistant Coordinator, Global Atlanta Stories, Atlanta Global Studies Center*
Creating non-profit media outlet and podcast on globalization in Atlanta, partnering with public sector

Evaluation of Program:

Student evaluations (CIOS):

- “I enjoyed the opportunity of helping to develop the ALIS and GMC programs, and I found this and working with other faculty, staff, and students to be beneficial to my professional development.”
- “[Building Community] was definitely my favorite class of the semester. I learned a lot about building community, and information that was relevant to my life outside of my GRA. I loved this class and wish there were more like it.”

Additional Results: 60% of GRAs have obtained summer internships based on their work in the program. The *Culture at Work* program will grow in 2020-2021, with three new partners offering positions.

Initiative IV. VIP Team/Multimedia Studio: 21st Century Global Atlanta

Pedagogical Concept: This project brings together students of diverse backgrounds and disciplines to conduct interdisciplinary humanities research and thus practice whole person global citizenship at Georgia Tech. Its goal is to offer intensive, humanities-based, research-oriented “whole person education” to all students on campus, and has included students from every College at the Institute since its launch in Fall 2018, with over 30 students participating since 2018.

Humanities-Based Research Methods Taught:

- Media production, including podcasts, video storytelling, blogging, writing, and others.
- Research-based argumentation, writing, and presentation.
- Program development, instructional design, curriculum design.
- Methods include semi-structured interviewing, documentary film production, textual and cultural analysis, story-telling, and some data visualization.

Pilot Project: Humanities in the 21st Century: In Fall 2018, the team was piloted as *21st Century Humanities*. Students examined the role of the humanities in the science, technology, and business workplace and analyzed how “whole person education” applied in several key sectors: biomedicine, computer science, business, and physics. Students’ produced recommendations on how “whole person education” can complement a STEM education, digital infographics now used widely by the School, and preliminary analyses on campus mental health, now being developed by a master’s student into a training module for executives on mental health in the workplace.

Current Project: Globalization of Atlanta: Applying humanities-based expertise to Atlanta itself, the team aims to document the transformation of Atlanta into a global metropolis. Students are creating a media platform and podcast, with a focus on “Global Spaces,” or spaces where cultures intersect and transform, which has three episodes/modules: Bilingual Education in Atlanta, the Clarkston Community, and the city’s International Food scene. *Note:* This project is coordinated by a graduate student in the *Culture at Work* GRA Program (pg 6).

Evaluation: In 2018, the team received funding through the EVPR GT-FIRE Grant for Educational Innovation. In Fall 2019, the team received affiliation with the *Atlanta Global Studies Center, a Title VI National Resource Center*, and serves as the Center’s primary public-facing media production project. This partnership allows the students to interface regularly with leaders in Georgia’s local government and private sector.

Initiative V. Faculty Directorship, International House, OIE

In addition to her Modern Languages role, Dr. Strakovsky serves as Faculty Director of International House (I-House), a Living Learning Community offered through the Office of International Education, composed of 25 exchange students and 25 Georgia Tech students I-House connects students from over a dozen world cultures. Residents host numerous events related to international outreach, film, cuisine, culture, and languages.

Dr. Strakovsky hosts biweekly *Coffee Hours* to bring students together for an intercultural discussion of various topics, including mental health, sustainability, and most recently, a series called *Philosophical Fridays*, which provides space to discuss major questions, such as “What is adulthood and success?”, “What is love?”, “What makes an action morally good?”, and “What is knowledge?” Dr. Strakovsky has hosted 30 coffee hours to date.

Evaluation: We have anecdotal evidence that I-House spurs students to become global citizens. An alumnus (B.S. in Computer Engineering, Dec 2019) plans to do a M.A. in Communication in Taiwan in 2020. He writes “I want to help communicate technological development across cultures and serve as an ambassador to bring teams together.”

February 29, 2020

Dear CTL Awards Selection Committee:

I am writing in the strongest possible support of Dr. Jenny Strakovsky's nomination for a co-curricular award. As **Assistant Director of Graduate Studies and Career Education** in the **School of Modern Languages** and **Faculty Director of I-House**, **Dr. Strakovsky** has played a formidable role in advancing and strengthening an entire co-curricular set of activities. By focusing on priorities articulated in the Provost's **Creating the Next in Education Plan**, especially 21st century critical skills, ongoing substantive and purposeful career education, and whole person education, Dr. Strakovsky's efforts have had a transformative effect on both undergraduate and graduate students across the Institute. These efforts also fully align with Dr. Strakovsky's scholarly agenda, which includes a historical and cultural analysis of career growth and professional contexts in nineteenth- and early twentieth-century German thought.

I know the Dr. Strakovsky best through her position in **the School of Modern Languages**, and I will provide some context here to situate her efforts as part of an Institute-wide set of priorities.

The School of Modern Languages at Georgia Tech is unique in the nation because of its consistent dedication to integrating the priorities of a technology-driven institution with a substantive humanities-oriented academic agenda taught nearly exclusively in foreign languages. The School delivers a superb educational context on campus as well as through a set of highly recognized study abroad courses under the umbrella rubric of Language for Business and Technology (LBAT), which **integrates content-based language learning with cross-cultural communication, global leadership skills, and components of community-based and service learning**. Dr. Strakovsky will be leading a faculty-led study abroad program in **Vienna** this summer, which she has co-designed to include a strong emphasis on co-curricular learning in alignment with the LBAT principles.

The School of Modern Languages educates more than 5,000 students every year. In fact, more than 50% of all Georgia Tech undergraduate students choose to study a foreign language during their time on campus, without a language requirement. This is a formidable number, especially given tightly articulated STEM curricula that limit the number of electives that STEM students may pursue.

The School has launched two new graduate programs focused on career education in the past year, **the MS in Applied Languages & Intercultural Studies** and **the MS in Global Media & Cultures**, both of which attracted a large number of applicants and enrolled to capacity. The School's educational priorities thereby fully support the Institute's strategic plan and meet some of its primary objectives: to "prepare our students for global leadership" and to "educate good global citizens."

Within this student-centric environment of high-caliber teaching and curricular development, **Dr. Jenny Strakovsky stands out**. Serving as the Assistant Director of Graduate Studies and Career Education, she has effectively conceptualized, organized, implemented, assessed, and evaluated all of the School's **career education** initiatives. Her efforts have led to a turnaround in the School's entire curricular approach, integrating a much stronger emphasis on 21st century critical skills, whole

person education, culture building, and global competencies. This is especially evident in our two M.S. programs, which are designed to be professional degrees focusing on applied skills, project management, and leadership.

Dr. Strakovsky's statement provides ample detail of her accomplishments and the demonstrated positive impact these innovations have had. I won't repeat them here. Instead, I will confirm that under Dr. Strakovsky's leadership, the School's career education and co-curricular efforts are being conceptualized as aligning with and supporting what is emerging as foundational principles for **President Cabrera's Vision for the Institute 2020-2030 Strategic Plan**, namely, emphases on inclusivity and diversity of approaches, methods, and learning strategies; positive culture building, health and well-being; global competencies; and continuous learning and professional growth, and positive impact on the Tech campus and Atlanta. In addition, Dr. Strakovsky's exceptional academic leadership fully aligns with the School's priorities, as outlined in its collectively developed Strategic Plan 2020-25, where we identify that one of our key contributions to the Georgia Tech educational and research environment can be creatively captured in the following motto: **"Change the Conversation: Cross-Cultural Competence for Global Leadership."** To this end, Dr. Strakovsky's formidable efforts align fully with and indeed advance the priorities of the Institute as a whole.

In conclusion, please allow me to reflect on one of the most inspiring set of interactions I have had with Dr. Strakovsky. I had an opportunity to co-teach with Dr. Strakovsky in spring 2019 in **the course "Career Education for Global Citizenship."** I learnt a great deal from Dr. Strakovsky, who is a skilled pedagogue with an excellent rapport with students. I found particularly impressive her efforts to integrate co-curricular events and opportunities into the classroom, focusing on experiential learning. In this way, students acquired through practical engagement the leadership, communication, and empathy skills that were being taught as part of the curriculum, all the while emphasizing that career growth is a lifelong endeavor, where we all have personal agency. The strategies Dr. Strakovsky employed will continue to shape my own teaching and approaches to integrating co-curricular initiatives into my courses. I thank her for allowing me this opportunity to collaborate and to learn from her.

I hope that this letter has made it abundantly clear to the selection committee how much Dr. Strakovsky's efforts are valued by the School and by our students; in addition it should be known that the number of stakeholders reached by her efforts are significant, leading to impactful positive outcomes. I wish her every possible future success.

Please do not hesitate letting me know if I can answer additional questions.

All the best,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Anne Westbrook". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "A" and "W".

Professor and Chair, School of Modern Languages
Founding co-Director, the Atlanta Global Studies Center
aws@gatech.edu

Letter of Recommendation for Dr. Strakovsky

To whom it may concern,

Dr. Strakovsky has been an instrumental professor in my and many other students' cultural, personal, and professional development at Georgia Tech. I have had the privilege of having her as a teacher many times since she came to Tech nearly three years ago. Her passion for teaching and helping students to be the best they can be in a global community is unmatched. I find her to be an incredibly humble, passionate, caring, motivated and dedicated person. She has pioneered many diverse cultural, linguistic, and career events and courses in such a short time. Therefore, it is such an honor for me to be able to recommend her for the Innovation in Co-curricular Education Award, something I believe she fully deserves.

Amidst all the professors I have ever had in my time at Tech, I am certain that Dr. Strakovsky stands out as one of the most unique and outstanding professors. She is someone who you want to keep in touch with, stay after class to engage with, and get to know better. The atmosphere she creates in her class is nothing short of joyous yet hard working. I have been a student in her "Global Career Lab" and "Careers for Global Citizens", two courses that she introduced to the Tech curriculum. Her experience and teaching style phenomenally demonstrated the strengths of building a global community. She has a clear vision of how to help push students to become diverse global citizens willing to contribute to their society. Her vision helped me get in contact with a professor in my field of study and to have him present to our class on the differences between science in Germany and the U.S. Not only has she worked to develop these courses for students, but she has also been a key figure in extracurricular events. She has been integral in forming the German Club at Tech, which focuses on cultural and lingual cooperation and education. Organizing the annual holiday market, where representatives of all languages and cultures get to come together to share their traditions, was another one of her cornerstone accomplishments just this past year alone. The international house has been another key focus of hers. She has worked there to make sure that students coming to Tech from around the world can feel welcome, at home, and accepted no matter their culture or background.

Dr. Strakovsky's work is an inspiration to us all. The commitment and devotion that she has shown both in and out of the classroom have expanded the Modern Languages department's reach to all students on campus. I have never known a time that she hasn't been working on something new to introduce to students and faculty. I am truly privileged to have known her from the start and see how much she has grown in her time here. I know that I can speak for many other students who consider her to be one of the best professors at Tech and one who they know cares for them deeply. It is my wish that you see her powerful influence and the contributions she has made towards the global community at Georgia Tech and accept her for the Innovation in Co-curricular Education Award.

Sincerely,

Matthew Powell

Campbell Beadles: Letter of Support for Dr. Jenny Strakovsky

Dear Selection Committee,

I am writing to enthusiastically recommend Dr. Strakovsky for the Innovation in Co-curricular Teaching Award. I began working for Dr. Strakovsky two years ago and since then I have been fortunate to help with some of her co-curricular programs, specifically the Global Career Lab (piloted as the Global Career Intensive) and “Culture at Work” Graduate Assistantship Program. Through my participation in these programs, I have seen the positive impact on students’ lives and their futures. Dr. Strakovsky has worked tirelessly to position students for success in the 21st century workplace and has pioneered innovative programs that combine language, culture, and humanities education to position students to achieve their goals in a global career.

Dr. Strakovsky’s Global Career Intensive provided German-language immersion and career design and planning to undergraduate students. In this program, I was TA Coordinator, and during my time in this role, I saw students not only develop skills needed to become global citizens, but also realize their potential as future leaders in their fields. Coming into the program, some students were not sure what the future would hold for them, but Dr. Strakovsky was able to help them realize their potential as global citizens. I personally saw students develop and describe their dream career paths and goals, when before they were unsure about how their interests would fit into a global career. Many students were extremely excited to learn about opportunities to live and work in a German-speaking environment, and Dr. Strakovsky designed the program to position students for success in these opportunities. Through mock interviews, a site visit to Grenzebach, and meetings with native German professionals, students in Dr. Strakovsky’s Global Career Intensive gained confidence in their abilities to achieve success in a global workplace.

I am now in my second semester as a Graduate Assistant in Dr. Strakovsky’s “Culture at Work” GRA Program. Under her pioneering leadership, I have gained skills that I will be able to utilize in my future career and which will make me a competitive candidate for a variety of potential roles. Dr. Strakovsky made sure that the Graduate Assistantships provide relevant experience to students for their future careers, and also serve as an opportunity for learning through a reflective component. Having been looking at employment opportunities for post-graduation, I have increasingly noticed that many of the skills employers are looking for are those that I have developed during my time as a Graduate Assistant. These skills include website design, communications, event planning, and writing. Without this opportunity, I would have been lacking in the skills necessary to achieve my goals. I am now better prepared to enter into a cross-cultural, global workplace and to succeed.

Dr. Strakovsky has been a pioneering force at the School of Modern Languages. Through her initiatives, such as the Global Career Intensive and the “Culture at Work” Graduate Assistantship Program, students have become prepared for success in a global workplace and to create positive impacts in their fields. Without these co-curricular programs, students, including myself, would not have been able to realize their potential and learn about their opportunities as global citizens. It was through Dr. Strakovsky’s leadership and innovative teaching that these positive changes have come about, and I eagerly recommend her for the Innovation in Co-curricular Teaching Award.

Sincerely,

Campbell Beadles
Graduate Student, Global Media and Cultures (Russian)

Letter of Support for Jenny Strakovsky

Dear Awards Committee,

A common phenomenon among students returning from a transformative year abroad is a sense of being lost at sea in a once-familiar environment. One is unsure how to integrate what one has learned into one's university experience and future career. Upon concluding a year abroad in Munich, Germany, I returned to Georgia Tech in Fall 2017. To my engineering course load, I added a single German class: *Germany Today*, taught by Dr. Jenny Strakovsky in her very first semester at Georgia Tech, before she had launched *Global Career Lab*.

I clearly remember the first day of class: on the board was the following quote by Franz Kafka, famed German writer: "*Where are you riding to, Sir?*" "*I don't know,*" I said, "*Only away from here, away from here. Always away from here, only by doing so can I reach my destination.*" Dr. Strakovsky's analysis of the poem moved me immensely. It was as if someone had looked into my heart and articulated what I could not: a desire to use my education creatively, **not only to fulfill a narrow definition of success, as defined by a lucrative career and social prestige, but to use my education to structure my very approach to life.** I did not recognize it then, but *Germany Today* was the start of an intellectual collaboration and mentorship with Dr. Strakovsky (who I will refer to as Jenny) that would profoundly shape my college experience. Here, I will attempt to articulate some of her most important lessons to me.

Jenny helped me reflect upon and articulate my own experiences to build a "framework for flourishing," a concrete plan for self-actualization that incorporates major themes from literature, art, positive and educational psychology. I found myself in Jenny's office in Fall 2018 with an ambitious goal: to write an essay for the Elie Wiesel Competition. It's a prestigious award, given to a student who uses his or her experiences to powerfully articulate an ethical lesson. I wanted to write about how my year in Germany impacted me, but it was a difficult task. Jenny agreed right away to mentor me for the essay. Faculty have mentored me in the past, but this experience was wholly different.

Once a week for four weeks, Jenny would invite me to her office for a "one-hour consultation," which often lasted three hours if the work wasn't done (and this after a full day of working and teaching classes). I would show her my draft, and she would provide incredibly nuanced and subtle feedback, while still being sensitive to my pride as a writer. But she was demanding. "Fine writing can't excuse a lack of substance," she liked to say, and she would grill me about the deeper truths hidden below my experiences. She demanded perfection from me: we would argue about the connotations of adjectives *ad infinitum*. She gave me her own books by Goethe, Walter Benjamin, and Hannah Arendt—very challenging authors—and I would read them before our next meeting. And then, with a reassuring smile, she told me to call or text her if I had questions.

What drives Jenny to go the extra mile – to go the extra ten miles? She believed that good art was worth it. She believed that *I* was worth it. It was like having my own personal literary critic, my own Harold Bloom – except her time was a selfless gift, given without any expectation of recompense.

The following spring, I had the opportunity to serve as Jenny's student assistant for a book project, called *The Search for Happiness*. It was a monograph based on Jenny's dissertation which integrated contemporary psychology with the humanistic tradition. I have struggled with poor mental health in the past, and I have viewed it as a purely psychological phenomenon deserving of clinical treatment. However, under Jenny's tutelage, I came to realize that flourishing is multifaceted, and that just like therapy, literature and art can also be used as a medium of self-reflection and self-betterment.

She was also a great employer. She wanted results, but she wanted me to excel even more. I worked hard, but my work was sometimes inconsistent, which tended to lower my self-esteem. Instead of getting upset with me, she sat down with me to analyze why these inconsistencies occurred, how I could change my work habits, and why she valued my work. That's not all –when I came up with an interesting idea to

connect mental health initiatives on Georgia Tech's campus to the literature that I was analyzing, Jenny supported me unquestioningly. She encouraged me to apply for a President's Undergraduate Research Award to support and recognize my research. This particular award is not typically given to students in the School of Modern Languages, but her faith, not to mention hours of editing my application, paid off – I won the award.

Jenny also taught me how to create “experimental spaces” for intellectual growth. She also taught me how to integrate my humanities education with my engineering career path. I recently partook, for example, in German Career Lab, a novel venture designed by Jenny. A laboratory is a place of experimentation, observation and practice. The Global Career Lab became a place for autobiographical observation, and to experiment using the strengths and passions revealed therein to actualize my desired life path. I improved my Business German, met several German-speaking faculty and created an application portfolio for jobs I'd love to have in Germany. I've often wondered - "what will my life look like in ten years?" but I'd never designed my life to realize a particular outcome. For my final project, I created a poster featuring three life paths ("*Lebenswege*") with concrete goals that led from one early career stage to another. I am well on my way to realizing one of these life paths, which will take me back to Germany soon.

A few years ago, Jenny set up Coffee Hour for me and a handful of students who wanted to speak German out of the classroom, in an informal environment. This Coffee Hour took place during Jenny's first year at Georgia Tech, and it would later become an integral part of Career Lab. It was instrumental in building attendees' confidence in their conversational skills, without the pressure to produce perfect grammar. Her expectations for us were clear, though: this was an experimental space. For my part, I invited German-speaking faculty in bioengineering to the Coffee Hour, so they could discuss their research with us in German. Jenny helped me create marketing material for those faculty talks, setting the stage for the Guest Speaker Series in German Career Lab.

It gave me confidence that I could build a professional network, something I hadn't believed an introvert like myself was capable of. Perhaps it is unsurprising that Coffee Hour alumni would later form the leadership for the newly founded German Club. When I was nominated as Vice-President, my motivation as leader was clear. Jenny had helped me develop a framework for my flourishing, and I wanted to impact other students' lives the same way she had impacted mine. I helped organize Coffee Hour 2.0 and even a student-run German Career Week, inspired by German Career Lab and one piece of advice from Jenny. “The only difference between a small-minded endeavor and an impactful organization is big thinking. So think big.”

In the course of our three-year-long collaboration, Jenny has helped me to produce many pieces of writing and organize many worthwhile ventures. She has treated me as an intellectual equal, but she has also shown me as much compassion as one would show a lost child. Yet I am not her only protégé, nor is my experience unique. The “*star to every wandering bark, the guiding north star to every lost ship,*” Jenny's outstanding qualities have made her mentor, confidant and inspiration to many others –not just me. Students enter her office, slumped with the ennui of defeat, and they leave with shining eyes, able to envision themselves as leaders, entrepreneurs and innovators in their chosen fields. Many of her students will achieve greatness, and a few of them may even be recognized by the world for it. But for many of them, it will have been Jenny who saw their greatness first and struck a match to it. For like knows like, and there is a rare greatness in Dr. Jenny Strakovsky, educator extraordinaire.

Sincerely,

Ranjani Sundaresan

Dear members of the CETL selection committee,

29 February 2020

Jenny Strakovsky has been a crucial mentor and the most influential faculty member during my time as an undergraduate student at Georgia Tech. As the Faculty Head of my Georgia Tech residence, International House (I-House), she has, through her initiatives, forged a truly unique and marvellous community that has contributed to my understanding of myself and the place I have in the world. For many, their college residence is simply a place to sleep and eat. For myself at the I-House, it is where I have built lifelong friendships with people from a dozen countries around the world, gained exposure to cultures I never would have otherwise, and built an identity as a global citizen. As such, it is with the upmost enthusiasm that I am providing this letter of recommendation to Jenny for this award.

Jenny has played a pivotal role in creating an environment within the I-House that champions cross-cultural understanding. She has facilitated the creation of resident committees within I-House (including I-Culture, I-Sport, I-Wellness and I-Music) which organise events that foster bonding between residents and allow residents to share their own cultural celebrations. Furthermore, her initiative to create Chair and Event Director roles within committees has provided a unique opportunity for residents to develop their leadership and teamwork skills in a setting where they can work on something that they are passionate about. A personal example was my role as an events organiser for I-House's Chinese New Year celebration in February, which was a tremendous highlight during my first few weeks living at Georgia Tech. It was a truly special experience to be able to be in a setting where the forty or so residents I lived with were excited to learn and take part in a tradition that usually I only get to share with my immediate family.

In addition to building the cultural awareness of I-House residents, Jenny has also significantly expanded my critical thinking toolkit through embedding philosophy into life at the I-House. Jenny organises and facilitates I-House's biweekly "Philosophical Fridays", which are discussion forums to which she brings to the table important topics for us to discuss. Topics are far-ranging and have included ethical frameworks for responding to human suffering and the evolving definition of "adulthood". These sessions are dynamic and incredibly thought-provoking, often involving breaking into focus groups, or presentations she has curated for more denser topics. I am grateful that Philosophical Fridays have provided me the uncensored and unjudgmental space to think deeply about my place in the world and what motivates my actions. This supplement to my typical classroom education has been important, as it will ensure that as a soon-to-be graduate, I have a mental framework for thinking critically about important social issues in the community, as opposed to simply becoming passive and desensitized.

Jenny has also generously brought to I-House her experience teaching career studies to graduate students at Georgia Tech. The workshops she holds have helped prepare residents for everything from writing resumes, to delivering elevator pitches and answering questions in interviews. Moreover, she is endlessly patient in providing personalised advice about career decisions and answering questions about navigating the complicated modern economy. In my many conversations with Jenny about what it means to have a fulfilling career, I have appreciated how she gives me the chance to step back from the superficial hallmark of what "success" means and to reflect deeply about how I want to contribute to wider society.

The I-House is incredibly fortunate to have someone such as Jenny who has dedicated herself to providing opportunities for residents to grow into the best versions of themselves. I cannot give higher praise for her efforts in fostering an incredible community that embodies the values of empathy, cross-cultural understanding and global friendship. I offer my fullest endorsement to Jenny for the GT Innovation in Co-curricular Education Award.

Sincerely,



Linda Zhang

Resident of International House and Undergraduate Student
Georgia Institute of Technology

Atlanta, 2/29/2020

Dear Selection Committee:

I am writing to nominate my colleague, Dr. Jenny Strakovsky, for the Innovation in Co-curricular Education Award. As part of a new initiative in the School of Modern Languages, Dr. Strakovsky and I developed the 3-day German Career Workshop which is part of the Global Career Intensive Pilot Program. Dr. Strakovsky initiated the idea and I supported her during the development phase and the workshop itself that took place in summer 2018. Three undergraduate students who worked as TAs helped with the invitations of our business partners, the marketing, and the logistic efforts. They helped our business partners in delivering their presentations and helped the students in the workshop understand the presentations by translating particularly difficult vocabulary from specific fields. While we expected a small group to sign up, 15 students enrolled and attended all three days.

Dr. Strakovsky reached out to German-speaking faculty at GT in STEM disciplines. Three faculty members from Biology, Chemistry, and Computational Media delivered lectures in German that our students attended, and the Q&A took on special importance because our students interacted with the faculty members in the target language German. We reached out to the German-American Chamber of Commerce and the Georgia Department of Education. We invited German speakers from Siemens, Design2Sell, and Actemium. The interaction with faculty and students from various disciplines and from outside the Institute was rewarding for the freshmen and sophomore students in the workshop.

The intense workshop created a community of students who are interested in including their foreign-language abilities into their career plans. Dr. Strakovsky led the students through an exercise in which she used Kafka's stories to talk about issues facing people in the modern world. She then engaged students in an Odyssey Activity in which students had to choose three different professional paths and outline them in a PowerPoint presentation and a short overview to faculty and students in the workshop. The students realized that the 21st-century skills needed in today's workforce include many humanities skills such as making connections, listening and speaking skills, soft skills that employers see as management and team-player skills.

It is through the planning phase and delivery of the workshop that I realized the significant accomplishments of Dr. Strakovsky. I was impressed with the students' excitement about the workshop and the rigor of the projects that they worked on, submitted, and discussed. Working with real world business partners and learning about their different career paths, our students had the opportunity to engage and learn to interact with confidence—in a foreign language—with these partners as if the students were already applying for internships or permanent positions. During the workshop, students also had to write their CVs in German in order to be able to apply for jobs abroad or in the US where they needed to be able to speak and write the language. In addition, colleagues in the German Program volunteered to do mock interviews with the students so they would be prepared for professional job interviews when students are tasked to describe their strengths.

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As part of a grant application for funding from The Halle Foundation for the German Program, Dr. Strakovsky brought along a flyer to a meeting with the Foundation that connected Sustainability and German STEM fields with German-language studies. The representatives from The Halle Foundation were very impressed with this innovative approach to connect the humanities and STEM disciplines with the help of a foreign language workshop. The Halle Foundation that has supported the German Program for several years has since then pledged funds for the workshop for three years because the German Career Workshop is unique in its approach and implementation. Dr. Strakovsky's experience in design thinking, career education, and her innovative style of helping students find the right career paths helped make this a very successful workshop which then was turned into a 1-credit hour Global Career Lab class that offers students an opportunity to take it during the academic semester rather than before school starts in the fall semester.

Indeed, the workshop and the class that originated in that workshop have potential to become a substantial part of undergraduate (and possibly graduate) education within and outside the School of Modern Languages. It supports Georgia Tech's strategic goal of graduating 'global citizens' as the students in the workshop and the class have been able to work with intercultural communication and business expectations in the German workforce in the US and abroad. While the workshop and class provided students with a range of topics to reflect on, they also worked as teams on hands-on problems. Not only did we interact with members of the German-speaking professional community on campus but all participants also visited the company Grenzebach Corporation in Newnan, GA, that provides automation solutions and builds welding technology, building materials, and casting parts. A Grenzebach employee took the students on a tour and they got to hear a presentation about the products and business interaction with their German parent company and could discuss different topics with German employees at Grenzebach.

During the semester-long class in 2019, Dr. Strakovsky invited Erika Burk, the VP of HR from Porsche Cars North America, Inc., who delivered an excellent lecture and afterwards interacted with students in German, answering their questions about gender issues in the automotive industry and skills that GT students should acquire in order to get an internship or a full-time job with the company.

Dr. Strakovsky and I co-presented on the connections of "Design Thinking, Language Pedagogy, and Career Education" that are part of the workshop and its new approach at a German Teacher Workshop. The Teacher Workshop is geared towards German high school teachers and German college faculty and it is organized by the American Association of German Teachers in Georgia (AATG-GA). It was held in October 2018 at the University of Georgia in Athens, GA, and colleagues in German Studies were very interested in possibly starting a similar workshop or class at their home institutions. Dr. Strakovsky has been a wonderful colleague to work with and I am grateful that I could work with her on the German Career Workshop that fits perfectly into our curriculum.

Regards, 

Britta Kallin, Ph.D.
Associate Professor of German
German Program Director