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To Whom It May Concern:

It has recently been brought to my attention that an accurate evaluation of David Lang's teaching potential is desired. As a student, I had the pleasure of learning the intricacies of both basic statistics and basic econometrics from Mr. Lang. If any student is able to judge Dave's teaching skills, it should be me.

To consider David as a teacher, one must first consider the nature of a professional teacher. A professor is a teacher of students. The ability of the teacher to relate the course material to the student's world is what distinguishes a good teacher from a poor one. Numerous times throughout my college career, I have had professors that have become so wound in their own education or research interests, that they lose touch with the student. I am confident that this is not so with Dave. At any point through two semesters, I could have thrown virtually any topic at him in casual conversation. Dave would always provide an intelligent response. I might have been talking baseball, music, or a host of other things. One event I will not soon forget, is when I made a reference to a old song categorized as "hip-hop." I did not expect a response from him, much less an accurate response. Much to my surprise, Dave followed up with the next line of the song. I was shocked.

David is strong in sensing the class's attitudes. If the class was not really paying attention, he might ask some questions, or make a bad joke. This usually would wake us up, and we paid attention for remainder of class. The bottom line, is that Dave was sensitive to the class, and made teaching adjustments to compensate.

This is not to say that the class lost focus by any means. We accomplished what any introductory stats or econometrics class in any university might have. We understood the material just as well as students who attended more competitive schools. Sometimes students lacked the appropriate background to fully comprehend the material. Dave compensated by giving out his contact information, cutting out of his own schedule to answer clarifying questions. Ultimately, David gave us every advantage that he could.

David is very knowledgeable about the material. Obviously, if one earns a doctorate in a subject, he is expected to know something about the topic. Dave's level of knowledge on the given topic was up to answering some of the most obscure questions that students could ask. Nine times out of ten, he would respond with the appropriate answer. The other times, he admitted that he did not know, but promised to look up the answer and resolve the student's lingering doubt.

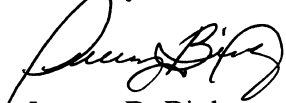
The knowledge aspect is very important for a student. If a teacher is confident about a topic and can answer any questions, then the entire class respects the teacher. When the student respects the teacher, the nature of the class changes. When the teacher viewed by the students to be an “expert,” the incentive to pay attention increases. The incentive to pay attention increases and the entire class learns more. I have seen Dave exhibit these characteristics *continuously*.

David’s lecture style commanded the attention of the class. He did not mumble or stutter when he spoke, but recited the material in a manner that all could hear and understand. Dave sets a good pace for the class, but this falls under the “sensitivity” measure described above. Dave *never* lost his composure in class. One time, as I recall, he attended class with a bad cold. He said that he felt miserable, but a test was only a few days away, and we had to cover material. He made it through the entire lecture, not only composed, but he managed to keep the lecture up to the standard he had set throughout the semester.

Dave is not only an excellent teacher, but he’s also a good person. He takes a personal interest in the student. This may not be possible in larger classes, but nevertheless, Dave has that attitude.

All of these elements combine in David Lang to make a superior teacher. I can assign Dave the highest praise I can give a teacher: Role Model.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jeremy D. Bixby". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "J" and "B".

Jeremy D. Bixby