

Marinus Smith Staff/Faculty Recognition Award

Date of Nomination: December 2008

Name of Nominee: Jesse Stommel

Department/Staff position: English and Writing Instructor

Why does this person deserve to be recognized as an outstanding faculty member at CU?

In the past 5 years I have attended two universities and had numerous teachers. When asked to nominate an outstanding professor who models integrity, greatly enhances the education of myself and others, and enhances the classroom experience Jesse comes to mind immediately. I first had Jesse as an instructor for LGBT literature. In a class like that, it is imperative that the professor be respectful and ethical. If I were to write nothing else, I would say that every student from that class who didn't graduate followed Jesse to his next class the following semester. We followed him because we all agreed that he was the best professor and we loved taking a class with him. Jesse is a wonderful professor, he is approachable, sensitive, incredibly smart and quite fun. He caters his class to meet the strengths of every student, through teaching the courses in several manners. He nurtures the artistic side of students with photo essays and other visual representations of class material. He helps the shy students participate more with a blog. He leads great in-class discussions which he starts and everyone else finishes. People come to class and do their work because they want to, not because they have to.

I remember several times talking about the fact that I was putting a tremendous amount of effort and priority into his assignments because I cared about them and having several of my friends agree with me. I worked incredibly hard in both of his classes because I was passionately interested in what we were doing and what I was getting to do. Because Jesse goes to great lengths to meet and understand each of his students he was able to help myself and two other students work together on a final project. It was an illustrated screen-play of an adaptation of a novel we had all read for the class. He was able to sit down with each of us and identify which strengths we each had and how we could use them together to create this large and complex project. We spent a tremendous amount of time because we wanted to produce something we were proud of and we did.

Jesse's students are so fond of him and his classes, that alums visiting campus have been known to visit his classes. Lastly, I would say that I needed to take a second writing class for my core requirements and I waited two semesters to be able to take it with him. My advisor suggested other classes but I told him I would rather wait and take the lower division class so that I could have Jesse again. He has inspired me in countless ways, and helped me to believe in myself as a student and a human being. He even makes me want to be a professor. Jesse Stommel is a professor that CU should be proud to have.

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