

Council for Advancement and Support of Education
1307 New York Avenue, NW, Suite 1000
Washington, D.C. 20005-4701

Re: U.S. Professors of the Year Program

April 11, 2012

Dear Selection Committee:

Traditionally, one would expect a letter of recommendation to begin by extolling the virtues of the professor in question. But John Boyer is not your traditional professor; nor does his candidacy require questioning.

My first glimpse into John's uncanny teaching ability was through Billy, a newfound friend of mine in my freshmen year at Virginia Tech. Billy was begging me to join him for just one class. He wanted to show me one of the best professors in the entire world. I thought it odd, as Billy rarely spoke in absolutes.

I caved in, made my way to Professor John Boyer's World Region lecture, and made myself comfortable for another boring lecture. How was I supposed to know that this class would have the greatest positive impact in my life?

John exploded on stage with an energy unrivaled by any other professor. You could feel it coursing throughout the massive auditorium. Engagement was immediate. You had no choice but to pay attention and learn - not because it was forced, but because John's pedagogy was a joy.

I am a software engineer by design, and cared little for global affairs and politics until John opened my eyes. He helped me understand. He helped me foster a love for the world.

This may sound emotionally charged, and it is, but that is one of John's exceptional qualities: that he knows how to involve his students to the point where they care deeply for the subject.

At heart, John is an innovator. He is *the* crossroads between technology and education. John has experimented with innumerable strategies to boost engagement and learning. Examples include creating fictitious personas (with blogs, Twitter, and Facebook posts to follow suit); weekly videos posted online with his own take on global news; open office

hours, streamed live through the internet, that allow students a unique opportunity to interact directly with their professor regardless of class size; and utilizing video conference chats to have live discussions with incredibly influential world leaders*.

John pushed the boundaries of personal interaction by holding a class of almost 3,000 students. I was a part of that class. I felt more connected to John during that class (thanks to his exceptional communication) than any other professor that semester.

I had the pleasure of experiencing another class with John. This time he focused on wine from different regions of the world. John quickly took my petulant and myopic view of wine and opened my mind to a new perspective. I still cannot fully understand how John taught me to love two disparate subjects, but I blame it on his amazing talent to nurture a respect for knowledge and culture.

You will be incredibly hard pressed to find another candidate that matches John's passion for teaching and innovation. His emphasis is on the 'why' of education, not the 'how' or the 'what.' It is this focus allows him to inspire his students to such great heights. It is this reason that every student on campus knows John by name. It is this reason that John's influence reaches far past the classroom, out across the world and into the hearts and minds of people.

With that final thought I leave you my highest recommendation for John Boyer to be selected as one of this year's U.S. Professors of the Year.

Sincerely,



Paul V. Mederos, Jr.
Enchant Engineering
Founder and CEO
(650) 200 - 3620
pvm@enchant.co

Virginia Tech Class of 2010
College of Engineering, Computer Science

*Have you seen the chat with Aung San Suu Kyi? It is unforgettable.

<http://www.plaidavenger.com/plaidcasts/skype-interview-with-aung-san-suu-kyi/>