Dear Faculty Award Selection Committee,

Difficult as it is to choose just one individual, there is but one answer to who is most deserving of the Mentor-of-the-Year Award and that individual is Dr. Leslie Ashburn-Nardo. She strives for excellence daily in her research and teaching, provides encouragement with a wonderful personality, cares for and prepares her students for the future, and is the finest mentor I could ever hope for in my academic training. Nevertheless, let me tell you a little more about why Dr. Ashburn-Nardo is the Mentor-of-the-Year.

As an experimental social psychologist, Dr. Ashburn-Nardo investigates prejudice and discrimination with an emphasis on reducing such harmful biases through interpersonal confrontation. She and her colleagues have recently developed and published a social-cognitive model describing the essential steps a person takes to stand-up and confront a perpetrator of prejudice, termed the Confronting Prejudice Responses (CPR) Model. In her research lab, myself and other students (both undergraduate and graduate) fully participate and contribute to her scientific investigations of prejudice reduction through interpersonal confrontation. Dr. Ashburn-Nardo extensively includes us in the research process and allows us to present data and findings at local academic conferences. She often makes a point in saying, “I want you all to get something more than just a strong letter of recommendation from your experience in the lab.” Undeniably, I can scarcely begin to fully describe what she has done for me in undergraduate education. In my honors capstone research project, Dr. Ashburn-Nardo has guided me through defining a research question, conducting a very thorough literature review, designing a 2 × 2 between-subjects experiment, obtaining Institutional Review Board approval, the grant writing process, constructing dependent measures, and developing a data analysis plan. We are “knee deep” in the research process and there seems to be no limit to what she can teach me; Dr. Ashburn-Nardo is a brilliant research mentor.

My first experience with Dr. Ashburn-Nardo was in her Introduction to a Lab in Psychology course (PSY-B 311). In all honestly, I cannot recall learning so much valuable

information and applying it concurrently in any one course. She was clear, concise, organized, effective, and humorous when appropriate. Most importantly, she made learning a fun and exciting experience, which can be a difficult feat in a research methods course. I remember, for instance, her teaching my class various techniques of participant assignment (e.g., matched-pairs assignment) while using characters from “The Simpsons” television series. Of course, Dr. Ashburn-Nardo’s class is nothing short of an academic boot camp; she challenges her students and teaches up to the highest standards. I recall staying after class as well as visiting her office to discuss the course material and other advanced topics. She is always happy to help her students and presents real examples from her actual research. Because Dr. Ashburn-Nardo knows I wish to attain an academic appoint as a professor of psychology someday, she continually offers me valuable professional advice; Dr. Ashburn-Nardo is a superb teaching mentor.

In conjunction with her excellence in research and teaching, Dr. Ashburn-Nardo has a wonderful personality and a strong character. She holds exemplary ethical standards, acts professionally, displays dedication, thinks positively, and can always manage to make you laugh. Though she is continually challenging me to achieve and standout among the crowd, Dr. Ashburn-Nardo is delightfully supportive. For example, she has, with great detail, offered me advice in preparing for the Graduate Record Exam and applying to graduate schools, presented the step-by-step academic journal publication process, and helped me understand the process of tenure in academia, which she is presently experiencing first-hand. Feeling tremendously prepared for the next step in my academic training as a future social psychologist, I am exceptionally thankful for her informative advice and encouragement. Like many students before me and many more to follow, I am proud to call Dr. Ashburn-Nardo my mentor, just as I suspect you will be to present her the Mentor-of-the-Year Award.

Sincerely,

John C. Blanchar