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January 11, 2011

Chancellor's Award for Excellence in Teaching Review Committee
Faculty Appointments and Advancement
Office of Academic Affairs
Administrative Building, Room 126
Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis

Dear Review Committee,

I am quite pleased to nominate Robert G. Bringle for the Chancellor's Award for Excellence in Teaching. I have had the opportunity to work with Bob since 1994, and I have gained a unique and well-informed perspective of his abilities and dedication as an outstanding teacher at IUPUI. Our initial work through the Office of Service Learning developed and matured over time into the Center for Service and Learning (CSL). Under Bob's leadership, CSL is nationally and internationally recognized as a leader in creating campus-community partnerships to support teaching, research, and civic engagement and producing scholarship and research related to each of these three domains. The campus recognized CSL for its achievements with designation as one of the first Signature Centers, and one of the first Signature Centers to maintain this distinction for the next five years. Clearly, the work that Bob Bringle has orchestrated is recognized to be of high excellence by the campus and others in higher education.

The supporting letters from faculty and students as well as the documentation provided by Bob gives strong evidence that Bob's career has been built upon an excellence in teaching. Bob's career has been dedicated to promoting student learning in Psychology and across campus; mentoring faculty, staff, graduate, and undergraduate students; developing curriculum and innovative teaching strategies such as service learning and undergraduate research; and contributing to campus policy through his active leadership within University College, the Honors program, and the RISE initiative. My comments bring forth additional evidence that comes through fifteen years of personal interactions and hall conversations, observations of how he works with students on research projects, and seeing him inspire countless faculty through consultations, workshops, and summer institutes about their teaching.

Three characteristics describe Bob's teaching abilities; his enthusiasm, his dedication to excellence and good practice, and his philosophy of teaching that has a steady belief in the abilities of others to succeed. His enthusiasm is best illustrated by the various "napkin drawings" that he has created over the years. Napkins, or envelops, frequently become alternate means to communicate his ideas. He has a very inquisitive mind yet wants to communicate his ideas to others, regardless of the setting. I have learned about co-efficient alpha, stages of relationships for campus-community partnerships, and roles of "complete and connected scholars" through various napkin drawings.

Each fall, he enthusiastically greets a room of Freshmen Service Scholars with questions and awaits the opportunity to wrestle with new ideas that are generated by their

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answers. He often refers back to lessons learned from the freshmen, for as a teacher he is constantly learning. He simply cannot contain his enthusiasm when a new idea emerges and yet he readily awaits the critique and feedback of others to test and extend his ideas. He is like an artist in this way, expressing his thoughts with passion, yet awaiting feedback from others to improve his ideas.

In terms of his dedication to excellence and good practice, Bob willingly teaches others in such a way that excellence prevails. He stays late and arrives early to work one-on-one with Graduate students around research and data analysis. He places a great deal of confidence in the work of G.A.s and CSL staff because he does an excellent job of coaching and mentoring along the way. I have often overheard conversations that he has with G.A.'s about their professional goals and he eagerly questions their ideas and assumptions. He takes students under his wing yet expects them to fly. To me this is excellence in teaching.

Bob's inquisitive nature is in constant pursuit of good practice in teaching. Specifically, in terms of the pedagogy of service learning and international service learning, he convenes teacher/scholars to bring to light good practice. I clearly remember working with him in 1994 to modify his Introductory Psychology course into a service learning course. He wanted to know the elements of good practice and eagerly modified his course accordingly. In addition, he is willing to make changes to improve elements such as structured reflection, mutually beneficial partnerships, and strategies to support motivation and satisfaction for students as they work within community-based settings.

Bob's philosophy of teaching holds firm to the conviction that all students can be successful. In informal conversations and in University College faculty meetings, Bob is a steady supporter of the unique role that IUPUI has in terms of supporting the success of first-generation college students. He will often give first-year students the benefit of a second or third chance as they acclimate to the new environment of higher education. His dream would be for each student at George Washington Community High School to be tutored and mentored by an IUPUI college student because he is convinced of the power of education.

For those who have worked with Bob on a campus committee, it is well-known that he is an active faculty member who is willing to debate, deliberate, and modify his position to improve and move forward campus policy. The campus is a stronger and more responsive institution because of his leadership in service learning pedagogy. For this reason, and all others documented in the evidence provided, I trust that the review committee agrees that Bob's career at IUPUI truly exemplifies Excellence in Teaching.

Sincerely,

Julie A. Hatcher, Ph.D.
Associate Professor, Philanthropic Studies
Director of Undergraduate Programs