

August 20, 2019

Dear Selection Committee,

It is my greatest pleasure and honor to write this letter in support of Cathleen Rhodes' candidacy for University Distinguished Teacher. I am elated to learn her efforts and gifts are being recognized at the University level. This is absolutely well deserved. As an alumna of ODU and proud Monarch, there were a few extraordinary people who shaped my college experience. Cathleen is unquestionably one of those people, and the clear standout. You might ask why a person who taught an introductory Women's Studies course and an intro English course would be so influential to a student pursuing his dream of becoming a physician. I can sum it up in three characteristic components: exceptionally thoughtful, extraordinarily dedicated, absolutely committed to advancing knowledge through finding truth. I've taken a multitude of courses through my undergraduate time at ODU, time spent on an M.D. at Harvard, and through three years of post-graduate training at Duke University, and I dare say, Cathleen was the most transformative and impactful professor I have ever had. Her course was undoubtedly the most formative of my 24 years of formal education, and that is no overstatement.

I will never forget walking into her *Intro to Women's Studies* course. I thought she was going to hate me. I had some unvetted, unenlightened, yet strongly held, views that I knew would ultimately be shared with the class. The manner in which she led the class consistently fostered safe and open discussion where all views were heard and valued. She pushed us to think more deeply about how we arrived at our conclusions, about how we could differ so much from our classmates, about what factors and experiences drive our thought processes. Although we initially differed in opinion on some pretty hot-button issues, she never bludgeoned us over the head with her position. She took to task allowing us to draw our own conclusions and share them with others. In short, she taught us introspection, critical thinking, self-awareness, respect for others, humility. I left viewing the world much differently than I started. I argue she taught me to be a better human, and that has had a downstream effect on the lives I touch every day in the throes of an overwhelmed emergency department serving an indigent population. My patients see a physician who is thoughtful in the delivery of care of everyone, from all walks of life, from the minorly injured to the critically ill, and Cathleen had a great deal to do with that. I would not be so compelled to serve an impoverished and uninsured population, had it not been for the transformational nature of this course.

Although I could go on and on about how great Cathleen is, I won't. I just know that if you're in the business of making Monarchs who will go on to make ODU proud, Cathleen is an integral part of that. You need her on your team. She brings forth a degree of excellence that is rarely seen. She is truly outstanding, and you should be most proud to name her the ODU University Distinguished Teacher. If this letter can help her in this achievement, it will be but a small repayment for all she has done for me and the ODU community. I thank you for your time and consideration. Please feel free to contact me with any questions.

Sincerely,



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