



November 9, 2019

Dear Members of the Faculty Promotion and Tenure Committee:

In my early years as a faculty member I had the opportunity to be mentored by Dr. Joe Dahms, now Professor Emeritus of Economics of the college. In one memorable interaction he passed along the advice that if I ever was asked to write a letter of review, to deeply consider the implications. He advised me to ask myself whether the candidate represented the ideals I had for scholarship, service, and instruction and whether I would entrust them to be a steward of the college. He said that a review letter was my opportunity to help determine the professors that I would feel proud to call my colleagues.

In all of these ways, I strongly endorse Dr. Safner; he lives up to and defines these ideals. He is the type of professor who excels at his craft and is the type of person I am proud to call a colleague. This letter presents a perfect opportunity to highlight not only his research and service as an Assistant Professor at Hood College, but also his commitment to students as a teacher-scholar.

As an educator, Dr. Safner advances the instruction and engagement of students in the Economics, Business Administration, MBA, and Doctoral programs at Hood. His econometrics class shines as a prominent example of an innovative teaching experience that exposes students to not just advanced problems in economics theory, but that also teaches students the tool R – one of the most sought-after skills of today’s employers for the creation and visualization of reproducible analysis. He teaches the class in our glass-enclosed trading room and routinely attracts an audience outside the room looking in. Other faculty members make it a habit to sit in on the course when their schedule permits. In talking with one following the course he expressed both the highest praise of the teaching method and the cutting-edge nature of the topic.

The praise of his teaching comes as no surprise. Dr. Safner is a leader on campus who has made, and continues to make, significant contributions to Hood, the profession of economics, and a broad array of communities. On numerous occasions, students have expressed support for his teaching methods and organization in the classroom. They genuinely enjoy his classes and his positive demeanor. On course evaluations, Dr. Safner consistently scores at high levels; the student narratives reflect his strong devotion to learning. They often talk of his ability to inspire students to learn very challenging and unfamiliar material of Economics.

With his research, as in the classroom, Dr. Safner is able to bring the theoretical to the practical. His grant from the CTL involves the development of educational resources that will serve econometrics students worldwide. His recent presentation at the Southern Economic Association Annual Meeting concerned the economic history of copyright laws and the intellectual property concerns in this domain. With working papers being primed for submission, honors research projects being developed for the upcoming year, and a flood of doctoral student inquiries into supporting work, Dr. Safner’s research stands poised to offer critical guideposts to shape this area. Other research publications of Dr. Safner deal with similar aspects at the intersection of law, business innovation, and advancing social technology (e.g., his paper on “Institutional Entrepreneurship, Wikipedia, and the Opportunity of the Commons”).

Beyond the classroom, Dr. Safner is constantly engaged with helping current students and recruiting new ones. Between the lines of his CV, you will also find that Dr. Safner is a stalwart champion of the college – taking leadership roles and answering curricular questions well above the expectations of any junior faculty member. He not only sits on, but chairs the curriculum committee, he is omnipresent at admissions events, and delivers untold hours of service to the School of Business through managing faculty searches, supporting departmental events, and in advising and mentoring of students.

In his teaching, in his service, and in the endless ways that he improves the lives of students, Dr. Safner is a tremendous asset to Hood College. If you have any questions concerning my evaluation of Dr. Safner, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "David Gurzick". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "D" and "G".

David Gurzick, Ph.D.
Associate Professor of Management Science
Delaplaine School of Business