

## Nomination – CTL/BP Junior Faculty Teaching Excellence Award – Dr. Johnny Blazeck

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February 6, 2021

**CTL/BP Junior Faculty Teaching Excellence Award**

Dear Award Selection Committee:

It is my pleasure to nominate Dr. **John Blazeck** (Johnny) for the CTL/BP Junior Faculty Teaching Excellence Award. Johnny has established himself as an outstanding, accessible and approachable instructor in his courses since starting at Georgia Tech in 2019. Johnny has primarily taught our crucial foundational course, ChBE 2100, the introductory course in the major, though he has also taught one section of the next course in our sequence, ChBE 2130. Johnny has received stellar teaching scores in ChBE 2100, with overall effectiveness scores ranging from 4.7-4.9 (4.9 avg) in the “overall instructor effectiveness” rating. In his one section of ChBE 2130, Johnny has also rated well, scoring a 4.0 in this first offering. This course is typically among our lower rated courses in the curriculum, and in the same year that Johnny taught this course, scores for other instructors ranged from 3.7 – 4.5.

Johnny brings great enthusiasm to the classroom and has a passion for teaching and learning. He creates an inclusive classroom by assigning group work and promoting peer-peer teaching and learning and discouraging competition. One student remarked: “I haven’t had (any other) professor display such a profound level of empathy and understanding for me as a student. It is no secret that 2100 can be a challenging course both in workload and mentally, but so many of the students I worked with cited their success in the course to Dr. Blazeck. He managed to encourage students regardless of grade to compete against themselves not each other to drive their desire for learning.”

Johnny embraces Socratic teaching, asking a lot of questions while actively encouraging questions from student in the class, as well as after lecture time. He employs active learning approaches to engage his students, including ‘pair and share’ activities, informal class surveys (by hands or standing), and full class demonstrations (e.g. small groups of students act as vapor, liquid, or gaseous molecules as we learn about vapor-liquid equilibrium).

Johnny has clearly inspired large numbers of students in his courses, and often does so by connecting the course materials to his research program. This has attracted many students from his classes to inquire about research experiences in the Blazeck laboratories. For instance, one student remarked: “I can say without a doubt that Dr. Blazeck has been one of the most monumental figures in my education. Without Dr. Blazeck, I would not have realized my passion for chemical engineering in the biomedical field..... thanks to him allowing me to be an undergraduate researcher in his lab.”



**School of Chemical & Biomolecular Engineering**  
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The last two years have been a time of extraordinary stress, change, and anxiety for all people, instructors, staff and students alike. Through this period, Johnny has excelled as an instructor and mentor, and the students in his classrooms have thrived. He has inspired, supported, and motivated his students, as documented in the attached supporting letters, and has positioned his students for success with a strong foundational experience in ChBE 2100. I believe he is an ideal candidate for recognition with the CTL/BP Junior Faculty Teaching Excellence Award.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'CW Jones'.

Christopher W. Jones, Ph.D.  
John F. Brock III School Chair and Professor  
School of Chemical & Biomolecular Engineering  
Georgia Institute of Technology



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## Reflective Statement on Teaching

John James Blazeck

School of Chemical & Biomolecular Engineering

**Introduction:** As a Georgia Tech professor, I've considered it a privilege to be able to help guide students as they progress through their undergraduate journeys and embark on the next stage of their (soon to be) illustrious careers. I've led two core undergraduate courses in ChBE since joining the school in 2019. I've taught the foundational course for ChBE undergraduates, Chemical Process Principles, five times, and Chemical Engineering Thermodynamics once. My teaching has been inspired by my goals to assist each student master a given course's material, while helping them gain longer-term benefits, like critical thinking skills, enthusiasm for engineering, a peer network to rely on, and a belief in their abilities (and in their ability to improve). I've focused on three key areas to support my students' success inside and outside of the classroom: Building an inclusive classroom community, Engaging students with clarity and enthusiasm, and Promoting student wellness and success with empathy and accessibility.

### **Building an inclusive classroom community:**

*"I loved all the group work we did, it really helped me get to know my peers along with learn the material better. Even in class, the collaboration we did was amazing." -ChBE 2100 Student, 2021*

In each course that I lead, I invest substantial effort towards establishing an inclusive and lively classroom dynamic. I feel that peer-to-peer learning is an essential pillar of most students' education. However, students who are early on in their major's core courses are less likely to already have group of friends or peers to lean on and learn from, particularly with the disruption to normal campus routines caused by the ongoing pandemic. As I've taught the first ChBE core course several times, I've made it a focus of mine to ensure that these students can develop a peer network that might help them throughout their undergraduate and postgraduate careers. I've fostered these networks and an inclusive classroom community by taking several interrelated steps to promote early and thoughtful interactions amongst students, including in-class and outside-class group work, peer-to-peer feedback on professionalism, and non-competitive class grading policies.

I typically assign a group project that relates course material to topical events during the first two weeks of the semester, and from 2020 onwards, I've also assigned the first homework of the semester to be done as a group. By performing these teamed group work experiences two times early in the semester, I intend to promote an especially collaborative class environment. Importantly, I do not allow the students to pick their own groups, instead assigning them myself in a manner to prevent biases in gender dynamics that could prevent students who are historically underrepresented in STEM from feeling free and confident to contribute fully. In addition, I preface the first group assignment by emphasizing the importance of diversity in professional groups during an in-class exercise. Then after submission of the group project, I ask students to grade themselves and their group members on their professionalism and respect towards their group members, as well as their contribution to the team's work. This student-assigned grade is to continue to highlight the importance of inclusivity in engineering and team building.

Numerically, these early semester group work experiences ensure that every student in the classroom should have met and worked with at least six other students. This familiarity with

each other has several other tangible benefits. In the long-term, it might form the foundation of a professional network that promotes career success, and in the short term, it allows for lively class discussions and daily problem-solving group work with trusted associates (as I discuss below), instead of with seemingly unknown strangers. Finally, I also grade my exams without any curve, such that students don't feel that they might be in a competition with each other and helping a peer could somehow negatively impact them.

### **Engaging students with clarity and enthusiasm:**

*"Dr. Blazeck is super kind and understanding, as well as a very clear communicator. It's rare to have a professor who has never said something to make you more confused than you started - - but he never has!" -ChBE 2100 Student, Fall 2019*

I think it is of the utmost importance to present engineering topics with clarity and enthusiasm to best engage students. I routinely use Socratic teaching concepts to allow students to guide their own learning, and to be certain that all students have a clear understanding of key course themes, I begin every lecture with a brief recap of the prior class or week. In this recap, I expound upon central concepts and how they relate to our overall goals as chemical engineers, while discussing how what we know will inform what we will soon learn. In addition, I develop a very question-friendly environment in my classroom, and I always aim to answer questions by explaining the material in a new light or with a new example. Early on in a semester, I make sure that my students know that I do not consider their questions to be an unwanted interruption, but quite the opposite, that I consider them to be a welcome opportunity to explain a concept that is likely also confusing to many of their peers. I do this first by pausing and asking for questions, answering the few that may arise initially, and then by literally leaving the room for 1-2 minutes after asking students to come up with more questions as a group. Upon returning, the students typically have several more 'big picture' questions that they did not feel comfortable asking at first. I perform this exercise several times in the beginning of a semester, until I can count on students asking me to pause and give more details about topics several times per lecture. To be sure, having already encouraged students to work together through group-work opportunities allows for these 'forced' question formulations sessions to become quite lively, such that they also double as a refreshing class break.

I want to engage students and convince them of the value of what they are learning, and I think that this is best accomplished by being genuinely excited and providing insight about new concepts. During lectures, I employ active-learning concepts on a daily basis to promote student engagement, and to show my enthusiasm for their progress understanding new material. For in-person classes, these active-learning methods include 'pair and share' activities, informal class surveys (by hands or standing), and full class demonstrations (e.g., sets of students might be vapor, liquid, or gaseous molecules as we learn about vapor-liquid equilibrium). And for a hybrid/virtual course, I've utilized BlueJeans rooms coupled with the Learning Catalytics instructor-guided software. Because I feel that students should be consistently and immediately challenged to apply what they've learned, I also have students work together through longer examples together several times per week. During these longer periods of group work, I greatly enjoy moving around the classroom and either showing my excitement for how well student groups have tackled a complex problem, or giving hints to help groups who are stuck. Finally, one group-project per semester is a fully hands-on experience.

I first learned how effective these activity-based techniques are as a Class of 1969 Teaching Fellow, which was an invaluable experience towards improving my teaching. After seeing first-hand how much they have aided student learning in my courses, I now focus my class time equally between traditional lecturing and active classroom activities.

### **Promoting student wellness and success with empathy and accessibility:**

*“Dr. Blazeck was such a caring professor! As a student who was desperately failing, he helped me to start to get back on track. I never felt unintelligent in this class or that I could not succeed because I felt believed in!” -ChBE 2100 Student, Fall 2021*

I couple my efforts to engage students within an active classroom community with a personal commitment to being accessible and empathetic with all students, regardless of how well they have performed in a course (so far!). For instance, after the first exam of a semester, I reach out to students who underperformed and ask to meet and chat with them about ways to help them improve. I do this because I truly believe that any student at Georgia Tech has the ability to master difficult courses, and I feel that some extra attention and an early intervention can help bring that potential out of students who initially had a disappointing outcome. During our chats, I of course give these students study tips as well as what amounts to a ‘go/no-go’ list for exam preparedness, and I let them know that I think that they can be successful in the course, and that everyone, even professors, has had trouble on exams before. I also try to see if there’s anything that they feel might be preventing their best performance, and if there is, I set up times to meet with them for the next several weeks so that we can talk more about it more.

To maximize my availability for students, I never designate office hours prior to the beginning of a semester. Instead, I send a class-wide survey to gauge when *the students* are available, and then I set my office hours accordingly, as well as other out-of-lecture opportunities, like homework and problem-solving sessions. I also designate the fifteen minutes after lecture as additional ‘office hours,’ such that students will feel more comfortable staying after class to ask questions or discuss course material and current homework assignments.

### **Research, Teaching, & Going Forward:**

I feel that integrating research and teaching at Georgia Tech can further benefit undergraduate students. To this end, I often give an overview of my groups’ ongoing research in my courses, and I’ve invited fellow faculty to serve as guest lectures. Importantly, I’ve also mentored 22 undergraduate researchers (10 currently) that have been incredible contributors to my laboratory and have all made tremendous strides in understanding experimental design. To date, four of these students have been awarded the PURA scholarship, three have been accepted to top-10 chemical engineering PhD programs, and one was named a NC State Future Leader in Chemical Engineering.

Moving forward, my goals for teaching at Georgia Tech are to continue to promote student wellbeing, connections, and academic success, while also further integrating my research and teaching programs. Specifically, with the support of my chair and School, I am developing a new undergraduate/graduate course devoted to introducing important concepts of cancer biology, diagnosis, and therapy from an engineering perspective.

**Illustrations of the candidate's teaching excellence and the impact on student learning:  
CIOS Scores and Comments**

John James Blazeck

School of Chemical & Biomolecular Engineering

I have committed myself towards helping Georgia Tech students excel through my teaching, my empathy and accessibility, and by fostering a sense of community. I have considered it a pleasure to guide Georgia Tech students during their individual journeys, and I hope that their comments and highlight my enthusiasm for helping them succeed.

**CIOS Scores:** Overall response rate: 79% (149 out of 189 students)

Chemical Process Principles – ChBE 2100 (Spring 2019)

Class size = 31 students, # of respondents = 20, **CIOS overall effectiveness: 4.9**

Chemical Process Principles – ChBE 2100 (Fall 2019)

Class size = 38 students, # of respondents = 20, **CIOS overall effectiveness: 4.7**

Chemical Process Principles – ChBE 2100 (Fall 2020)

Class size = 27 students, # of respondents = 26, **CIOS overall effectiveness: 4.9**

Chemical Engineering Thermodynamics I – ChBE 2130 (Spring 2021)

Class size = 47 students, # of respondents = 43, **CIOS overall effectiveness: 4.0**

Chemical Process Principles – ChBE 2100 (Summer 2021)

Class size = 8 students, # of respondents = 5, **CIOS overall effectiveness: 4.9**

Chemical Process Principles – ChBE 2100 (Fall 2021)

Class size = 38 students, # of respondents = 35, **CIOS overall effectiveness: 4.9**

**Representative student comments towards ‘Building an inclusive classroom community’**

- “I really liked how Dr. Blazeck ran this course. He worked very hard to ensure that we came out of this course having a CHBE support group. I know personally, I left this course having so many more CHBE friends than I originally had.”
- “I felt like it was a safe space to ask any and all questions which I really liked. You are genuinely the best prof I have ever had.”
- “Dr. Blazeck could tell when the whole class was tired and would give some refreshing 2 minute breaks, which were especially nice in the beginning because we formed a nice community with our nearby classmates (some more than others). Also, I was really happy to find that Dr. Blazeck knew my name and would address me as such when turning in tests.”
- “He created an environment that was easy to meet new people and work in groups. He also listened to students concerns and immediately created solutions to resolve them.”

- “Dr. Blazeck's greatest strength was encouraging everyone to not be afraid to ask for help, which made the class environment a lot more cohesive to effective learning.”

### **Representative comments towards ‘Engaging students with clarity and enthusiasm’**

- “Dr. Blazeck's ability to walk us through complex problems so early in the morning in addition to making his students know that he cares has been one of the most refreshing things to experience. He calmed my fears of having terrible professors.”
- “Dr. Blazeck teaches conceptual details very well. In past courses, I would learn the math and not understand the mechanics 100%. Due to his style of teaching, if I get stumped during a test, I can reason myself out of it because I understand what is going on.”
- “Dr. Blazeck is very good at breaking down the more complicated parts of this class. He is also good at answering questions no matter how simple or complex. He always has a good answer.”
- “How clearly Dr. Blazeck communicated in class, and how insightful he was in answering any questions that came up. Also, he genuinely cared about teaching the material and helping his student succeed.”
- “Phenomenal ability to give criticism and have challenging criteria yet always done with respect. I always felt like your goal was to help me to learn rather than to answer my question just because I asked. Made asking questions much easier because I never felt degraded or disrespected for not getting something.”

### **Representative comments towards ‘Promoting student wellness and success with empathy and accessibility’**

- “I genuinely have never had a professor that seemed to care as much as you did. I felt like you were invested in me doing well, which encouraged me to try harder.”
- “Dr. Blazeck made this class. His willingness to work with students was astounding and the amount of time he invests to get to know his students is incredible.”
- “He was not only focused on if we know the content, but also on how well we could realistically apply the learned content, and when I struggled with that, he reached out to me and helped me understand my mistakes and learn from them.”
- “Professor Blazeck showed a great deal of concern for his students wellbeing and quality of learning. It was helpful when he would step out of the classroom to let his students discuss about problems or other topics so that it felt like an open, comfortable space to express opinions, and then the group could talk to him as a whole.”
- “I felt that I could ask Dr. Blazeck for a number of things and lean on him when I was in trouble. He helped me through medical complications and eased my fears. He also is a great lecturer. He knows the material extremely well and it made the class very fun to be part of.”



February 1, 2022

To the Award Committee,

I am writing to give my strongest support for Dr. John Blazeck for the CTL/BP Junior Faculty Teaching Excellence Award. Dr. Blazeck started as an Assistant Professor in the School of Chemical & Biomolecular Engineering in 2019, and has demonstrated teaching excellence in the courses he taught. He and I taught two different sections of the same course in Fall 2021, and I had the opportunity to observe him in the classroom.

In my observation of Dr. Blazeck's teaching in the classroom, I was impressed by his ability to engage students in group work and discussion as well as the obvious rapport he had with the students. Dr. Blazeck organized his material well beforehand using handouts of notes and problems, allowing the class to spend a significant portion of the time working in small groups to solve problems. He knew the names of all 40 students in the class and made deliberate effort to engage everyone; for example, he would ask students to discuss a counter-intuitive concept among themselves before returning to discuss with the entire class.

Dr. Blazeck's passion for teaching is also clear outside the classroom where he continuously seeks for opportunity to improve his teaching. For example, he became a Class of 1969 Teaching Fellow in his first year at Georgia Tech, where he learned some teaching techniques that continue to inform his teaching. Dr. Blazeck has also mentored many undergraduate students in his research group.

In summary, Dr. Blazeck is an outstanding teacher in the classroom and a model mentor of students. I am confident that he will continue this record of excellence in teaching, and that he will be a worthy recipient of the CTL/BP Junior Faculty Teaching Excellence Award.

Sincerely,



Yonathan Thio  
Senior Lecturer  
School of Chemical & Biomolecular Engineering

Dear Members of the award selection committee,

I am writing this letter in enthusiastic support of Dr. Blazek's application for the CTL / BP Junior Faculty Teaching Excellence Award. Dr. Blazek's capacity to listen and respond to students' needs is unparalleled. He is the engineering professor we all wish we could have.

In Spring 2019, I fell ill during Dr. Blazek's class, "Chemical Process Principles: CHBE 2100". Unbeknownst to me, I had undiagnosed cancer - and as I went through various stages of illness, Dr. Blazek worked personally with me to make sure I could take tests through a modified schedule and have notes to do homework. With his attentive help, I completed all assignments and tests and passed his course successfully. To him, my learning was paramount, and he made sure that I was able to achieve it regardless of my extenuating circumstances. It's not often to find that such quality makes professor Blazek a fantastically rare professor.

Dr. Blazek's spirit of passion for teaching extends beyond me. I have seen Dr. Blazek listen to students in the extra office hours that he holds after every lecture to help anyone with problems related to his class. He is adamant about receiving and implementing student feedback. In the first few weeks of his class, we struggled with the more theoretical side of mass and energy balances, so professor Blazek pivoted to giving us a plentitude of examples step by step to help our understanding. Any time we had feedback, he worked to implement it. His open-door policy ensures that he is accessible to any student needing his help with class issues or advice. The students of the first class he taught made him a card of good wishes because of his impact on them. It stated how he had affected their education and future trajectory. His passion and drive for teaching cannot be overstated.

I can say without a doubt that Dr. Blazek has been one of the most monumental figures in my education. Without Dr. Blazek, I would not have realized my passion for chemical engineering in the biomedical field, where I seek to make a career after I graduate, thanks to him allowing me to be an undergraduate researcher in this lab. I never even gave it a thought until working under Dr. Blazek. I'm so thankful for that opportunity he gave me.

Professor Black is exceptionally deserving of this award; even when he just became a professor, he was dedicated to his students' success and general wellbeing. I can't think of any other professor I've had that deserves it as much as he.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dek". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letter being a large, stylized 'D'.

Daniel K

Georgia Institute of Technology, Class of 2022

B.S Chemical and Biomolecular Engineering, Economics Minor

Dear CTL Awards Committee,

Dr. Blazeck was my professor for ChBE 2130 Thermodynamics I, and he is the Principal Investigator of the Immunological and Cellular Engineering Lab where I assist one of his graduate students. As a professor, he always started lectures by briefly summarizing previous content which then led into the objectives for that day's class. This gave the students a sense of comfort while also preparing for the topics to be learned next. He would lecture and provide worked examples, and always made sure he would answer any and all questions from the class. On occasion, he would place us in small groups to attack problems that he drew on the board; Dr. Blazeck walked around the class, asking about each group's progress and to see if we had any questions. When students formed an answer, he would ask them the steps they took to reach their conclusion. Right or wrong, he did not focus on the answer, but rather the process they took. Instead of giving the answer, he would find the flawed step and give a suggestion of where to inspect their work. Then, if there was still trouble, he would explain the concept the students may have missed or misapplied. Rather than give the answer immediately and leave the students to figure out their mistakes without help, he created a valuable space for students to learn specific to their needs. Dr. Blazeck's methods afford greater learning opportunities because it ensures each student's conceptual understanding is correct and gives students a chance to determine what course content their difficulties are stemming from.

In the lab, he expects a lot of his graduate students, but they are grateful because they know they are better off because of it. He challenges his students and gives them all the tools they need to succeed. Whether an experiment fails or they are unsure of what direction to take, Dr. Blazeck is there to brainstorm and consult. He will not give them the answer, but he will put them on the right path as to what is next. Bad ideas do not exist in his lab, to him it is all about learning and honing their craft. He encourages his students to explore all alternatives before truly committing to an idea and is always happy to listen and have a great conversation and exchange of ideas with his students.

This may sound cliché, but all this is to say that Dr. Blazeck is focused on giving his students the keys to success. He pushes each student because he knows they are capable of mastering more than even they understand. He has changed my perspective of what it means to master Chemical Engineering skills, and I have raised my own bar of dedication and approach as a result. Using what he has taught me in and out of the class, I am now a better student, engineer,

scientist, and person because of him. Other professors I have had at Georgia Tech have challenged me, but he is the only one that made me reevaluate my own potential and realize it is far more than I realized. Being a student of his was an honor, and I look forward to more students experiencing the difference he is making in our Georgia Tech Community.

Thank you for your time,

Conor Lenahan

*Chemical and Biomolecular Engineering '23*

[cLenahan6@gatech.edu](mailto:cLenahan6@gatech.edu)

Dear Selection Committee,

I am pleased to be writing in support of the nomination of Doctor John Blazeck for the CETL/BP Junior Faculty Teaching Excellence Award. Over the past year and a half, I have had the honor of not only studying under Dr. Blazeck in both ChBE 2100 and 2130 but I was also fortunate enough to conduct research in his lab and serve as an undergraduate Teaching Assistant this past summer in his ChBE 2100. While the past year and a half have been challenging on a global scale, I could not have asked for a more engaged and truly caring individual to introduce me to chemical engineering as well as encourage me to explore the world of immunological and cellular engineering.

Learning online has been challenging and often difficult to engage in, but Dr. Balazeck made it a priority to help us form the connections needed to succeed as chemical engineers in a school as challenging as Georgia Tech. He was able to maintain attendance and participation in all the courses I was enrolled in. He created an air of mutual respect among his students, teaching assistants, and himself. As students, he taught us how to excel by taking advantage of not only his office hours but also the organized homework sessions and problem sessions available weekly. The collaborative homework groups that were organized by Dr. Blazeck were also an excellent way for connections to be made and fostered camaraderie between the students. It was through these group engagements we as students were able to approach problems from different perspectives; additionally, I formed lasting friendships and gained an appreciation for teaching. This appreciation led to me applying for a role as an undergraduate teaching assistant (TA) within the department.

Dr. Blazeck took the time to meet with the TAs, where he listened to our recommendations on ways to improve the student experience and later applied them. Through being a TA, I was able to observe how each and every student formed a deep sense of admiration for their professor early in the semester. Through my weekly office hours with the 2100 students, I heard classmates discuss what they learned and how they approached problems collaboratively with a drive ignited by Dr. Blazeck's encouragement.

Beyond the classroom, Dr. Blazeck made himself available to provide a helping hand if a problem ever arose. I recall a meeting with him following my second exam when I felt defeated because of my grade. In the meeting, he took the time to reassure me. He broke down the individual problems with me and worked to ensure I knew where I had gone wrong emphasizing that I displayed understanding along the way. Since that experience, I haven't had a professor display such a profound level of empathy and understanding for me as a student. It is no secret that 2100 can be a challenging course both in workload and mentally, but so many of the students I worked with cited their success in the course to Dr. Blazeck. He managed to encourage students regardless of grade to compete against themselves not each other to drive their desire for learning.

During my time as an undergraduate research assistant in his laboratory, I was treated as an equal. I was invited to join in on team meetings, present on new and exciting journal reports, and apply for grants such as the Presidential Undergraduate Research Award. From my start in the lab, I was told no question was too small and no comment too insignificant to be addressed. This mindset drove me to explore the reasoning behind each process conducted.

Ultimately, I could not have asked for a more encouraging and supportive individual to lead me through my first chemical engineering course, teaching role, and individual laboratory project. It was due to the mentorship provided by Dr. Blazeck, that I have been able to develop as a successful student and more importantly make decisions about my future based on my experiences in his lab. It has been an honor to have met him, been taught by him, and mentored in his lab. I truly believe he is deserving of this award.

Sincerely,

Kassandra Homyuni

Georgia Institute of Technology

3rd Year Undergraduate, Chemical and Biomolecular Engineer Student

January 22, 2022

Dear CTL Awards Committee:

Dr. John Blazeck has had a tremendous impact on my life as a fourth-year chemical engineering undergraduate at Georgia Tech.

I first got to know Dr. Blazeck as a student in his ChBE 2100 Chemical Process Principles Class. As my very first major class, I was obviously nervous and excited at the same time. From the first day of the class, Dr. Blazeck assured us that, while the class is meant to be a challenge, he would do everything he could to help us succeed in the course. In addition to providing students with excellent guided notes and lectures for the course, Dr. Blazeck hosted regular office hours that proved very helpful to both myself and the other students who chose to attend. During lectures, Dr. Blazeck would frequently stop and ask the class if everyone was following along with the lecture and pose pertinent questions to ensure students were engaged and exhibiting understanding. Before each exam, either Dr. Blazeck or another professor would explain their specific research and invite students to get involved in undergraduate research.

Dr. Blazeck's explanation of his own research is what inspired me to become actively involved, notably in his research lab. Prior to our second ChBE 2100 exam, Dr. Blazeck related several course concepts to various aspects of his lab's research. This proved to me that the information I was learning in class about chemical processes was even applicable to the biological systems that were being researched in Dr. Blazeck's lab. Consequently, I began my work in the Blazeck Lab the second semester of my sophomore year (Spring 2020) and continued through the end of 2021. Throughout my time working in the Blazeck Immunology and Cellular Engineering Lab, I learned many things ranging from basic lab safety procedures to communication skills. There were weekly group meetings where graduate students, and sometimes undergraduate students, presented and discussed various research papers that were related to their prospective research projects, or gave research updates on what they were doing in the lab. Dr. Blazeck's methodology in the lab space fosters both hard and soft skills in this way.

Dr. Blazeck has also written letters of recommendation for me while I was seeking an internship opportunity, and consistently asked for updates on my search during his visits to the lab. Post-internship, Dr. Blazeck inquired about my graduation plans, and was always available if I wanted to speak with him for guidance. Dr. Blazeck's actions and inquiries are evidence that he cared for the undergraduates in his lab, not only because we were assisting him and his graduate students advance their research, but because he wanted each one of us to be successful in all areas.

With this letter I am both happy and proud to give my support to Dr. John Blazeck's nomination for the CTL BP Junior Faculty Teaching Excellence Award. Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,

Patrick Thomas Berry Nash