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Excellence in Teaching Selection Committee:

My name is Hannah Ricker and I was/am a student and mentee of Mark Staton, officially in the winter of 2015 in his Digital Marketing course, and unofficially for the rest of my career.

Under Mark's advising, I started an internship that I would not have received or taken had I not felt wholly confident in his guidance. Shortly thereafter, I dove headfirst into a fast-paced career running global digital marketing campaigns for a software company in Miami, FL. I owe this success to Mark Staton. Mark is the teacher of a lifetime because he not only taught me skills I use today, but also lessons I will revisit for the rest of my life. It is impossible to sum up all of the teachings garnered from Mark, so I leave you with three of the most important.

Never stop learning and asking why. Mark's thirst for knowledge and self-betterment rubs off on everyone around him. Interacting with Mark is a two-way street because he wants to get as much out of the conversation and lesson as you do. As a student in his classroom, you want to push yourself, find more, and go deeper because you see him doing that every day. Curiosity is something he does best; it's clear he wants to find out more *with* you, not for you. Pride aside, Mark opens his ideas to be shaped and changed as time goes on, and encourages his students to do the same by always asking why.

People matter. In the digital world of today with its seemingly endless and globe-spanning connections, it is ironically easier than ever to feel a sense of disconnect with the human face behind the screen. Mark has taught me that it is important to not lose sight of the person within the data, and each person is more than a statistic to study. From a business perspective, Mark emphasizes the power of balance between the quantifiable and immeasurable. On a personal level, he continues to show me the importance of human connection by remaining an active part of my life.

Have fun. Mark brings an infectious joy to the classroom; joy for teaching, joy for learning, and joy in connecting with others. It's easy to take life (and yourself) a little too seriously when you are talking about cost-per-click and return on investment, but Mark always found a way to laugh. He can even make boring website analytics an enjoyable topic. With Mark, you never stop having fun, because if you are breathing life into the everyday, you find the time enjoy yourself.

What really makes Mark stand out isn't his keen ability to relate complicated topics and lofty ideas to the occasionally distracted life of a millennial, rather his unbound talent to make connections and live his life with a sense of wonderment and fun. For these reasons and many more, I believe Mark Staton is a teacher of excellence.

Kindest regards,

Hannah Ricker