May 26, 2010

Dr. Linda Noble
Office of the Chancellor
Washington Avenue
Atlanta, GA

Dear Dr. Noble,

It is indeed my honor and pleasure to recommend to you for the 2010 Regents' Scholarship of Teaching Excellent Award Professor Sherry Southard from the Legal Studies program within the Social Sciences Department of the College of Arts and Sciences. Professor Southard is truly the celebrity on campus for developments in online pedagogy, but those developments come from a fully comprehensive approach that would be seen as the scholarship of teaching. In fact, in my twenty plus years of teaching and working in administration, I don't know if I have ever known of a colleague more perfectly paradigmatic for what scholarship of teaching should be, and because of that and because she is adored by her students and her colleagues in the department and across the campus, Ms. Southard is the necessary choice for this award.

I would like to comment on her role as a model for the enterprise of the scholarship of teaching. In many traditional discipline-based areas, the scholarship of teaching is not understood at all, and often what is claimed under that heading is either another species of traditional scholarship or glorified syllabus and assignment adjusting. Ms. Southard is truly engaged in the discipline and research of the scholarship of teaching and applies that knowledge and methodology in her classes, trying new methods, testing them, assessing the results, and publishing the project. Her work on student engagement is particularly compelling, and since she is working in an online pedagogy she has very effective means of testing the level of engagement.

Shortly after she won the much coveted Pearson-Prentice Hall Online Teaching Award, I had the good fortune to observe her presentation to a group at the Board of Regents' Office. What we witnessed was a series of online teaching modules that were so polished and so finished and so engaging that one would have thought it was created by a production company in Los Angeles instead of thinking that it was the product of one very hard working faculty member and lots of trials in classes with students. Ms. Southard would be the very first here to say how much help she had from her colleagues in building these modules, but it becomes very clear that the real
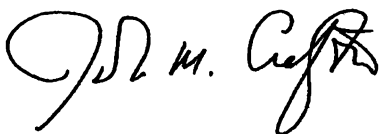
work, the design, the re-design, and the re-re-design comes from the intelligence, drive, and commitment of Professor Southard. As I try to describe her performance the only word that leaps to mind is a sixteenth-century Italian word from the European Renaissance, *sprezzatura*. This term was coined to describe what appears to be not only a flawless performance but one that is without boasting or self-promoting of any sort, and one that seems to be without effort, to have come by pure nature or grace. Professor Southard's pedagogy has that; it appears so natural for right that it's as if it were just natural, but the reality is that it is the result of many hours of hard work and rough drafts. It is not nature; rather, it is art.

To close this letter, I will quote the letter of her department chair:

> Her teaching and scholarly agendas, and where these agendas intersect, ideally capture this award's intention and spirit of recognizing the system's finest full-time instructional faculty for their demonstrated educational excellence in the scholarship of teaching and learning.

Dr. Mohammed, her department chair, has stated very succinctly the essence of what we her colleagues all intuitively know. She quite simply is the very best in this category, and we are proud, honored, and privileged not only to recommend her for this award, but also simply to lay claim to her as part of the faculty at Clayton State University.

Sincerely,

John Micheal Crafton
Interim Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs

<h1 style="text-align:center">Scholarship of Teaching and Learning Narrative: Sheryne Southard</h1>

Teaching Philosophy

My teaching philosophy is that student learning is maximized when the instructor conveys knowledge in a relatable manner; engages the students in the learning process; and motivates them to reach their full potential. I have practiced these principles in my traditional lecture format legal studies courses by providing in depth instruction with ample real world examples; promoting an interactive classroom environment with meaningful discourse; and encouraging student learning with constructive feedback and positive reinforcement. After establishing these three student-centered cornerstones, I transfer the responsibility for learning to the students and set a high bar for performance "to whom much is given, much is expected." Course evaluations reveal that my students are inspired to learn and motivated to attain my high standards.

In 2004, I taught my first online course and implemented this same teaching philosophy in the virtual classroom. My chief objective was to develop a course where the students experienced a dynamic and engaging learning environment tantamount to the traditional face-to-face sections. This was particularly challenging as the separation of time and space in asynchronous delivery courses is a natural impediment to instruction, interaction and motivation. My quest to overcome these obstacles and create a high quality online learning environment drove my research in this arena.

Like most of the current generation of faculty members that teach online, I was educated under the traditional lecture delivery format. As such, I had no experience as an online student and diligently endeavored to increase my knowledge of teaching and learning within this environment. First, I sought to understand how student performance differed in the pure online, blended, and traditional model. Second, I could develop informative instructional materials and motivate my students with emails and feedback. However, the challenge was to discover how to accomplish the final and more elusive prong of my philosophy, independent or collaborative engagement in the virtual classroom. Third, I sought to gain insight from leading authorities on guidelines designed to ensure quality online instruction. The following summarizes the progression of my research and contributions in these areas.

Scholarship of Teaching and Learning Projects

Goal 1: Improve online student learning by examining student performance in the pure online, hybrid and traditional delivery format courses.

Dozens of studies have examined how individual differences impact student performance in online learning environments. Many of these studies have revealed that students in online classes performed better than their counterparts in traditional classes (e.g. Maki, Maki, Patterson, & Whitaker, 2000; Maki & Maki, 2002; Maki & Maki, 2003). However, no study has explored whether individual differences are more central to performance in traditional, hybrid, or online classes. Many factors can attribute to student performance within the different delivery formats. Examining performance in light of personality may expand our knowledge base regarding the differences in course delivery models. In "Assessing the Role of Individual Differences in Student Performance in Traditional, Hybrid and Online Classes," I collaborated with researchers in a published work to examine the role personality plays in student performance in these different instructional delivery formats.

Assessment: A self-reporting personality assessment tool was administered to a subject pool of 133 students enrolled in online, blended and lecture courses within four diverse majors. The

assessment test measured neuroticism, conscientiousness, extroversion, agreeableness, and openness to experience (Costa, P, & McCrae, R., 1992). The researchers examined the participant's personality assessment in relation to GPA, course grades, and class type. An analysis of variance was then computed to assess the difference in how students performed based upon their intelligence (measured by GPA), personality characteristics, and class type.

A major finding of this study is that while students in hybrid classes did not necessarily perform better than their counterparts, when conscientiousness $(F(1,4)=2.565; p<.05)$ and openness to experience $(F(1,2)=4.15; p<.05)$ were considered significant differences developed. Specifically, highly conscientious students and highly open students taking hybrid classes outperformed others in virtually every other class setting.

First, students enrolled in hybrid online courses that possess a will to achieve tended to outperform their classmates that scored lower in these traits across all other class types. This may be best explained by the social presence and flexibility present in a hybrid class. Social presence is defined as the level of inclusiveness, connectedness, and immediacy a learner experiences (Tu & McIsaac, 2002). Students experience immediacy and inclusiveness when a professor reduces the psychological distance by speaking directly to the student's needs. While students in traditional classes have greater opportunities to experience social presence given the physical presence of the professor, hybrid students have similar opportunities because of the periodic class meetings. As a result, students who have been in physical contact with their professor and classmates may benefit from a level of connectedness not experienced by their online counterparts. Hybrid online students also enjoy the flexibility online classes provide as they are able to complete work at times conducive to their personal schedules. Coupling flexibility with the inclusiveness of physical contact can lead to improved outcomes.

Second, students enrolled in hybrid classes who are high in openness to experience outperformed their peers across class settings. Since a hybrid class represents the nexus between the traditional and online learning environment, students who are high in openness excel when presented with a continued variation of their learning experience offered in a hybrid setting. Hybrid classes create a more stimulating learning environment, thereby enhancing deeper learning which is a driving force to the academic performance of students open to new experiences.

Potential Impact: These findings provide valuable insight for administrators faced with the challenge of creating post-secondary curricula in an effort to balance the immediacy of traditional courses with the flexibility offered by distance education. For instance, to achieve maximum student performance in pure online courses, instructors could incorporate alternative measures to develop the social presence associated with the hybrid online classroom, such as offering periodic web-conference sessions. The initial findings were presented at an international conference in April of 2009 and the abstract was published in the proceedings. The journal article based on the subsequent phase of the study is under second review with a selective peer-reviewed publication.

Goal 2: Enhance student interaction in online courses by examining how to improve student participation in asynchronous threaded discussion posting exercises.

Asynchronous threaded discussions are widely recognized as a tool to enhance learning in the online environment (Brooks & Jeong, 2006; Palmer, Holt, & Bray, 2008). These discussions serve as a mechanism for reinforcing the material and promoting a deeper understanding of the course content (Brooks & Jeong, 2006). Similar to discussions in the traditional lecture format, they afford students the opportunity for analysis, reflection and

synthesis. Hence, they are an integral part of the online learning process (Carr-Chellman & Duchastel, 2004). Student participation in the discussions, however, is not automatic (Dennen, 2005). Discussion threads can often lack depth, include repetitive comments, and involve little interaction (Lobry de Bruyn, 2004, Brooks & Jeong, 2006). After reviewing the discussion postings over several semesters of a Business Organization course, I noted the need to incorporate measures to promote a discussion environment with rich and dynamic dialogue, rather than a field of obligatory discourse, hasty postings, and repetitive content.

I developed a student-centered asynchronous discussion education model that contained many elements proven to enhance learning in this environment. One of the central components of the model was an innovative discussion posting exercise. It was designed to promote a student-centered and activity-based learning environment with exercises that would engage the students (Carr-Chellman & Duchastel, 2000). Emphasis was placed on building a sense of community where students actively collaborated to construct knowledge (Rovai, 2002). This was accomplished with elements to foster participation; features to encourage group interaction; and instructional materials to promote engagement.

As a result of these measures, the average number of postings per student increased from 1.82 to 2.32 to 3.43 over three semesters. The number of discussion postings is not the single variable to measure the effectiveness of discussion exercises. Hence, I sought to explore this venue further in a study entitled "The Suspense Model: Factors Influencing Dimensions of Student Participation in Asynchronous Threaded Discussions." In this study, I collaborated with researchers to examine whether the structure and design of the discussion exercise influenced student participation.

Assessment: Students in my two hybrid business organization courses completed two separate asynchronous discussion exercises. In the first exercise, known as the suspense model, pertinent facts were delivered at multiple time periods. Students were randomly divided into groups, instructed to select a group name and advised to check back for updates on the facts relevant to their discussion. This factual information was relayed to the students through various audio-visual mediums. Later in the semester, students were assigned a second conventional discussion exercise. The students were randomly placed in different groups and required to discuss the legal implications of the hypothetical scenario. The factual information concerning this exercise was provided in a written format. For both exercises, students were afforded a seven day window of opportunity to respond and furnished a rubric with the grading criteria.

Qualitative methods were used to compare timing of participation; student perceptions of utility and satisfaction; quality of performance based on the depth and breadth of the discourse and interactivity. Students completed anonymous surveys wherein they rated their impressions using a Likert scale. The investigators analyzed each student's collection of discussion postings for the respective exercises using the criteria outlined in the rubric.

A noteworthy preliminary finding is the difference in timing of participation for the two models. More students were likely to begin the discussion exercise early within the allotted period for the suspense model than the conventional model. Timing of participation is essential to participation because the earlier the students begin participation in the dialogue, the more opportunities they have to interact with their peers and reflect upon their own interpretation. Students that begin posting within the final stages of the exercise are not able to experience the full depth of this learning process.

The study revealed that 45.8% of the participants posted their first response within the initial stage (first three days) of the discussion exercise (See Appendix C). This contrasted with only 28.5% under the conventional model. Viewed from the opposite end of the spectrum, 6.3%

of the participants submitted their first posting within the latest stage (final hours) under the suspense module and 11.9% under the conventional model. This suggests that given the controlled-time release of information, students were more likely to begin their participation early and less likely to commence the exercise late. The researchers theorize that pacing the release of information relevant to a hypothetical triggered student interest in the topic and motivated them to begin the exercise earlier. The promptness of their participation maximized their potential to gain the full benefit of the exercise.

Potential Impact: The suspense model was a key component of the student-centered asynchronous distance education model which earned me the Pearson-Prentice Hall Online Teaching Grand Award in October of 2009. In January of 2010, I was invited to present the distance education model before staff members at the Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia to demonstrate excellence in online instruction. The presentation was later recorded for faculty development use by the System. These preliminary findings build upon the literature by providing instructors with methods to enhance student learning in the virtual classroom. The design elements of the suspense model are adaptable to many discussion exercises and serve as a catalyst for promptness of participation. This can lead to improved participation and genuine dialogue to facilitate critical thinking, analysis and reflection of the course concepts. The data collection will continue through the Fall 2010 semester, and the findings will be presented at a future academic conference.

Goal 3: <u>Improve online instruction by streamlining the numerous distance education quality assurance standards to establish a universal instrument with clear and consistent guidance.</u>

My study of distance education standards began while preparing my online legal/paralegal studies courses to meet the rigorous approval standards of the American Bar Association (ABA). After extensive research, I co-presented "Conforming with ABA Guidelines for the Delivery and Content of Online Courses" at an academic conference in March of 2009. After being appointed as online-coordinator in the College of Arts and Sciences, I was charged with assisting in the development of the University distance education standards and working closely with faculty to facilitate and promote quality online instruction within the College. I sought out quality assurance standards heavily relied upon by institutions, administrators and faculty (U.S. Department of Education, Office of Planning, Evaluation, and Policy Development, 2009; Seok, S. 2007). A wide variety of standards, benchmarks, guidelines, and best practices have been developed by leading authorities. Although these standards were developed for the common purpose of ensuring quality, variations exist in scope, pedagogical emphasis, and review components, which are potentially confusing and misleading to administrators and faculty.

For instance, "Quality on the Line" prepared by the Institute for Higher Education Policy (IHEP, 2000) contains 45 benchmarks in 7 domains; "Guidelines for Good Practice" prepared by Higher Education Program and Policy Council for the American Federation of Teachers (AFT, 2000) contains 14 standards and "Best Practices for Electronically Offered Degree and Certificate Programs" prepared by the Western Cooperative for Educational Telecommunications (WCET, 2000) contains 29 best practices within 4 areas. In order to attain much needed clarity, I collaborated with another researcher in "Standardizing Standards: A Comparative Analysis of Quality Assurance Standards in Distance Education and a Proposal for a Consistent Framework" to analyze the plethora of existing standards, place them in context, and propose a consistent framework for online assessment.

Assessment: We collected well-established guidelines created by accrediting bodies, institutes, consortiums, and trade associations at the national, regional and state levels (See Appendix C). The standards were deconstructed into their essential components. Reoccurring standards were collapsed, synthesized and cataloged as the degree of consensus of their value supported their inclusion. Non-reoccurring standards were categorized separately to allow users the option to determine their applicability and relevance.

The resulting uniform framework emerged as a bifurcated set of standards based upon the user categories of administrators and instructors. The institution's decision makers must first establish an environment conducive to quality distance education. Only then can instructors design and deliver online courses that lead to effective learning in the virtual classroom. The first quality assurance category, specific to the University's administrators, is institutional commitment and support. These guidelines were synthesized and sub-divided into the categories of technological and human infrastructure, online curriculum policies, faculty support, and student support. The applicable standards were then integrated into their respective categories.

The second quality assurance category of learning effectiveness is specific to instructors. This section was sub-divided into two essential components: course design and course delivery. The instructor must first develop an online course to achieve maximum results and then deliver the instruction in such a way as to accomplish the learning objectives. Again, the applicable standards were then integrated into their respective categories.

Potential Impact: This meta-study provides administrators and faculty with a consistent, reliable, and universal tool to ensure quality online instruction in higher education. It is a holistic approach that furnishes decision makers with much needed guidance to improve the online learning environment. This quality assurance framework will be implemented in a pilot program within the Social Sciences Department at Clayton State University in Fall of 2010 and will subsequently be implemented within the entire College. The abstract for this study has been submitted for a presentation at an upcoming international conference.

Conclusion

The unifying thread of my ongoing research is measures to create an online learning environment conducive to maximum student performance. This research has been disseminated in academic conference presentations, peer-reviewed publications, invited talks, faculty workshops and instructional materials. Contributions of the work product emanating from this research have been submitted to online repositories, such as USG Share and AAFPE educational resource library. Furthermore, these findings have contributed to my training and mentoring of faculty that teach online courses and my service on national and university committees charged with improving online education. Through research of web-based pedagogy and experience, my efforts evolved from the pursuit excellence in one online course to a quest to improve the virtual learning experience, facilitate online faculty instruction, and help shape distance education quality assessment standards.

Addendices to SoTL Narrative

APPENDIX A

Table 2						
Results of ANOVA for Course Grades						
Source	Sums of Squares	df		Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	*82.30*	*85*		*0.97*	*2.04*	*0.00*
Intercept	*286.95*	*1*		*286.95*	*605.95*	*0.00*
Class Type	0.92	2		0.46	0.97	0.39
Intelligence	*12.86*	*3*		*4.29*	*9.05*	*0.00*
Extroversion	0.10	2		0.05	0.11	0.90
Conscientiousness	1.13	3		0.38	0.79	0.50
Openness to Experience	1.01	3		0.34	0.71	0.55
Class Type * Intelligence	0.90	4		0.23	0.48	0.75
Class Type * Extroversion	2.55	4		0.64	1.35	0.27
*Class Type * Openness to Experience*	*3.93*	*2*		*1.97*	*4.15*	*0.02*
*Class Type * Conscientiousness*	*4.86*	*4*		*1.21*	*2.56*	*0.05*
Intelligence * Extroversion	0.74	3		0.25	0.52	0.67
Intelligence * Openness to Experience	0.64	2		0.32	0.68	0.51
*Intelligence * Conscientiousness*	*4.42*	*4*		*1.11*	*2.33*	*0.07*
Extroversion * Conscientiousness	0.83	4		0.21	0.44	0.78
Extroversion * Openness to Experience	1.81	2		0.90	1.91	0.16
Conscientiousness * Openness to Experience	0.20	1		0.20	0.42	0.52
Error	21.78	46		0.473550725		
Total	1359	132				
Corrected Total	104.08	131				
R Squared = .791 (Adjusted R Squared = .404)						

APPENDIX B
Comparison of Discussion Timing for the Suspense Model and Conventional Model

Suspense Discussion Model *(N=48)*	2 – Excellent	1.5 - Good	1 – Fair	.5 – Poor	0 None
Promptness	N=22 %=45.8	N=8 %=16.7	N=15 %=31.3	N=3 %=6.3	N=0
Conventional Discussion Model (N=42)	2 – Excellent	1.5 – Good	1 – Fair	.5 – Poor	0 - None
Promptness	N=12 %=28.6	N=7 %=16.7	N=14 %=33.3	N=5 %=11.9	N=3 %=7.14

APPENDIX C
Source of Standards for Distance Education

Source	Date	Title
American Distance Education Consortium	1997	Guiding Principles for Distance Learning &Teaching
Chickering & Gamsom	1997	Seven Principles of Good Practice
Penn State University	1999	An Emerging Set of Guiding Principles and Practices
American Federation of Teachers	2000	Distance Education Guidelines for Good Practice
Institute for Higher Education Policy	2000	Quality on the Line Article Benchmarks for Success in Internet-based Distance Education
Western Cooperative for Educational Telecommunications	2000	Best Practices for Electronically Offered Degree and Certificate Programs
Sloan Consortium	2005	Quality Framework and the Five Pillars
Quality Matters	2008	Rubric Standards

References for SoTL Narrative

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Sheryne Southard
Scholarship of Teaching & Learning Curriculum Vitae Summary

EDUCATION
J.D., Arizona State University, Tempe, Arizona, Law, 1993
B.S., Nevada State University, Las Vegas, Nevada, Business Administration, 1990

TEACHING EXPERIENCE
Clayton State University, Morrow, Georgia (2002-Present) Assistant Professor- Legal/Paralegal Studies
Herzing College, Atlanta, Georgia (1999-2001) Adjunct Instructor-Business Law

HONORS/AWARD
Pearson-Prentice Hall National Online Teaching Competition Award (2009)

INTELLECTUAL CONTRIBUTIONS

Presentations on Teaching and Learning
(Forthcoming) Donsky, M. & Southard, S.M. (October, 2010). *Writing Across the Curriculum in Paralegal Programs,* Presentation upcoming at American Association for Paralegal Education Conference, Indianapolis, IN.

Southard, S.M. (2010, April). *Quality Instruction within the Asynchronous Learning Environment,* Workshop at Clayton State University, Morrow, GA.

Southard, S.M. (2010, January). *Asynchronous Distance Education Model.* Invited Talk at the University System of Georgia Board of Regents, Atlanta, GA.

Mooney, M. A., & Southard, S.M. (2009, October). *Developing and Implementing a Paralegal/Legal Studies Bachelor's Degree.* Presented at American Association for Paralegal Education Conference, Portland, OR.

Tidwell, M. V., Southard, S.M., Mooney, M. A. (2009, April). *Assessing the Role of Individual Differences in Student Performance in Online Classes.* Presented at International Academy of Business and Public Administration Discipline Conference, Dallas, TX.

Mooney, M. A., Southard, S.M., & Brackett, H. L. (2009, April). *I Signed Up for an Online Class, What Now?* Presented at Clayton State University Start Smart Student Conference, Morrow, GA.

Southard, S.M., Mooney, M. A., & Calvert, L. (2009, March). *Compliance with ABA Requirements for Content, Delivery, and Assessment of Online Courses.* Presented at American Association for Paralegal Educators Conference, Atlanta, GA.

Publications on Teaching and Learning
(Forthcoming) Southard, S.M. (Fall, 2010 Issue) *Student Engagement Strategies in the Virtual Classroom.* To be republished in American Association for Paralegal Education periodical: The Paralegal Educator.

Tidwell, M. V., Southard, S.M., Mooney, M. A. (2009, April). *Assessing the Role of Individual Differences in Student Performance in Online Classes.* Abstract published in International Academy of Business and Public Administration Discipline conference proceedings.

Southard, S.M. (2010, March). *Student Engagement Strategies in the Virtual Classroom.* Published in the American Association for Paralegal Education AAfPE Bytes 1(2).

Abstracts Submitted for Presentations on Teaching and Learning

Southard, S.M. (October, 2010) Engaging the Student You Never See: Improving Student Engagement in the Asynchronous Online Environment, *International Society for Exploring Teaching and Learning Conference,* Nashville, TN.

Southard, S.M. & Mooney, M.A. (October, 2010) Standardizing Standards: A Comparative Analysis of Quality Assurance Standards in Distance Education and a Proposal for a Consistent Framework, *International Society for Exploring Teaching and Learning, International Society for Exploring Teaching and Learning Conference,* Nashville, TN.

Papers Under Review on Teaching and Learning

Tidwell, M. V., Southard, S.M., & Mooney, M. A. Assessing the Role of Individual Differences in Student Performance in Online Classes. *The International Journal of Business and Public Administration.*

Working Papers on Teaching and Learning

Southard, S.M., Mooney, M. A., & Burton, C. H. *The Suspense Model: Factors Influencing Dimensions of Student Participation in Asynchronous Threaded Discussions.*

Other Intellectual Contributions in Teaching and Learning

Southard, S. M. *Student-Centered Asynchronous Threaded Discussion Model,* Instructional resource contributed to the USG Share Instructional Resources Repository.

Southard, S. M. *Video Vignette of Lost Ring for Contract Law Discussion,* Learning object contributed to the USG Share Instructional Resources Repository.

Southard, S. M. *Rubric for Evaluating Online Discussions,* Instructional tool contributed to the USG Share Instructional Resources Repository.

Southard, S. M. *Respondeat Superior Discussion for Agency Law,* Learning object contributed to the American Association for Paralegal Education Electronic Resource Library.

Southard, S. M. *Interpreting Corporation Bylaws Discussion,* Learning object contributed to the American Association for Paralegal Education Electronic Resource Library.

Southard, S. M. *Audio Visual Legal Research and Writing Exercise,* Learning object contributed to the American Association for Paralegal Education Electronic Resource Library.

Professional Development in Teaching and Learning (2 years)

February - March, 2010: *Designing Quality Online and Hybrid Online Courses – Overview of Quality Matters Standard;, Assessment and Measurement*; *Resources, Materials and Learner Engagement; Technology; and Learner Support & Accessibility*; six workshops sponsored by Clayton State University, Morrow, GA.

February, 2010: *Streaming Media - Camtasia and WebConferencing - Wimba,* two workshops sponsored by Center for Instructional Development at Clayton State University, Morrow, GA.

October, 2009: *21st Century Paralegal National Conference,* sponsored by American Association for Paralegal Education, Portland, OR.

April, 2009: *Utilizing Interactive Classroom Activities,* webcast hosted by Dean of Retention and Student at Clayton State University, Morrow, GA.

April, 2009: *Creating an Online Community*, sponsored by Center for Instructional Development at Clayton State University, Morrow, GA.

April, 2009: *Internet Legal Research, Nuts & Bolts of Business Law, Nonprofit Law*, three seminars sponsored by The Institute of Continuing Legal Education, Atlanta, GA.

March, 2009: *Paralegal Educator Regional Conference*, sponsored by American Association for Paralegal Education, Portland, OR.

January, 2009: *Problems in Discovery & Professionalism*, sponsored by Institute of Continuing Legal Education, Atlanta, GA.

December, 2008: *Labor and Employment Law*, sponsored by The Institute of Continuing Legal Education, Atlanta, Georgia

March, 2008: *ABA TechShow Conference*, sponsored by American Bar Association Legal Practice Management Division, Chicago, IL.

SERVICE ACTIVITIES Related to Teaching and Learning

December, 2009 – Present: College of Arts and Sciences Online Coordinator – work closely with College faculty to develop and maintain quality online courses.

January, 2010 – Present: University Online Instruction Committee Member – create and support the University's distance education quality assurance plan.

October, 2009 - Present: American Association of Paralegal Education Distance Education Task Force Committee Member - develop strategies and resources to support successful distance education in the legal/paralegal studies discipline.

April, 2009: International Academy of Business and Public Administration Discipline Conference Discussant - stimulated constructive discussion of papers presented at conference.

March, 2009 - September, 2009: StartSmart Conference Planning Committee – plan 4th annual freshmen success conference.

November, 2008 – May, 2009: Faculty Development Committee – promote instructional development activities.

October, 2005 – May. 2008: Student Success Committee - address issues of student success, specifically in the areas of graduation and retention rates.

August, 2004 – May, 2008: Faculty Council Member – contribute to the development and review of institutional strategic planning and institutional effectiveness.

May 22, 2010

Regents' Scholarship of Teaching and Learning Award
BOR of the University System of Georgia
270 Washington Street, SW
Atlanta, GA 30334-1450

Dear Selection Committee Members:

I am pleased to submit this letter of support for Sherry Southard, Assistant Professor of Legal Studies at Clayton State University, as a nominee for the 2010 *Regents' Scholarship of Teaching and Learning Award*. Professor Southard is truly an outstanding faculty member, a tireless teacher and scholar, a marvelous colleague, and an all around asset to the University System of Georgia. Her teaching and scholarly agendas, and where these agendas intersect, ideally capture this award's intention and spirit of recognizing the system's finest full-time instructional faculty for their demonstrated educational excellence in the scholarship of teaching and learning. In fact, I am hard-pressed to think of any other faculty person who is more committed than Professor Southard to the scholarship of teaching and learning. For these reasons, I sincerely feel that Professor Southard is perfectly suited for this year's recognition.

In the two years that Professor Southard has been a tenure track member of the Legal Studies faculty at CSU, she has produced an impressive body of high-quality scholarly and pedagogical work, and she has established herself as one of the most productive scholars in the College of Arts and Sciences. Her research is applied and she has a particular expertise in the efficacy of online education as it is compared with more traditional educational delivery formats. This research has built upon previous scholarship, but her advancements in the field have also carved out a unique scholarly space for her and have shown real promise in moving forward online educational pedagogy. Her work in this area has been formally recognized by the flagship professional society in her field, informally recognized by the University System Board of Regents, and by the College of Arts and Sciences at Clayton State University. Her work has also resulted in multiple conference presentations, peer-reviewed published works, and works in progress. But perhaps most importantly, her work in online education has yielded tangible and measurable results in actual student learning and academic success.

As a teacher and across all teaching formats (traditional, hybrid, and online courses), Professor Southard's teaching evaluation scores are exceptional and, by this measure, she easily qualifies as a superlative instructor. In fact, Professor Southard's scores consistently rank her at or very near the top of the over 40 full and part-time instructors in the Department of Social Sciences. While most students do not leave open-ended feedback in their teaching evaluations, many of Professor Southard's students take the time to do so and *all* of the comments she receives are very favorable. Comments routinely range from the simply laudatory "She's great!!" to the more specific, "In addition to providing the class with a learning module/study guide, I loved

that the instructor provided online lectures emphasizing greater details on legal information. The online lectures made the instructor, as well as, the class more personable." Clearly, her students appreciate her efforts and are inspired by her teaching.

For her scholarship and the integration of this work into pedagogical practice, Professor Southard was recognized in 2009 as the recipient of the Pearson-Prentice Hall Online Teaching Award, a sponsored and very competitive award given by the nation's largest legal studies professional society. Based in part on this recognition, Professor Southard was invited by the Board of Regents to give a presentation on enhancing online curriculum throughout the university system. Ultimately, because of her excellence and innovation in online education, Professor Southard was appointed and continues to serve as the coordinator for online course development in the College of Arts and Sciences at CSU. This position requires her to oversee all new online curriculum development in the college and to provide a series of hands-on curriculum development workshops for college faculty.

Beyond teaching and course development, Professor Southard has played an active role in reshaping the Legal Studies curriculum at CSU to better meet the professional and intellectual needs of today's students. Most notably, she has taken co-lead on developing a Legal Studies minor specifically geared toward students with an interest in pursuing a career in law. Indeed, Professor Southard's number-one professional priority and clearly what drives her research and teaching is her deep commitment to fostering the academic and professional success of her students.

I am truly pleased to have Professor Southard as a colleague in the department and a member of the Clayton State and University System of Georgia family, and I highly recommend her for this prestigious recognition.

Most sincerely,

A. Rafik Mohamed, Chair
Department of Social Sciences

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May 13, 2010

Nomination Committee
2010 Regents' Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL) Award
USG Office of Academic Affairs
Atlanta, Georgia

Re: Sheryne Southard, J.D.

To whom it may concern:

I am pleased to write this letter of recommendation for Sherry Southard for the Georgia Regents'
Award for Scholarship of Teaching and Learning. I know Sherry in her capacity as a member of
the American Association for Paralegal Education (AAfPE) Alternative Delivery Task Force and
as the winner of the Distance Education Teaching Award at last year's national conference. I am
a co-chair of the AAfPE Alternative Delivery Task Force.

AAfPE is a national organization that promotes quality legal studies and paralegal studies
education for the over 450 universities, colleges, private schools and institutions of higher
learning. Sherry is a valuable member of the AAfPE Alternative Delivery Task Force, whose
charge is to support the development and delivery of distance education courses in the discipline.
She is a powerhouse of creative ideas on how to make the online classroom come alive and
provide an exciting and beneficial educational experience for the students. She is innovative and
a true pioneer in the online method of delivering quality education to her students.

Prior to joining the task force, Sherry competed and won the online teaching competition where
she showcased a week in the life of her class. She is an excellent teacher who uses a combination
of media, enthusiasm, and knowledge of subject matter to make her classroom a most interesting
place to learn. She is especially good at interactive strategies to get the online student to engage.
I can personally attest to her contributions to the field of knowledge in this area as I have
implemented a number of her original ideas.

Moreover, Sherry is on the cutting edge of online education. She is an active member of the
committee and as such has participated in the Alternative Delivery Task Force online newsletter
"AAfPE Bytes." She wrote an article entitled "Student Engagement Strategies in the Virtual
Classroom " to share many techniques for excellence in online education with the members of
AAfPE. The article will also be featured in the organization's semiannual written publication
"The Educator."

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Her love for online education is contagious and her contributions to online legal studies/paralegal studies education are ground-breaking. The Alternative Delivery Task Force would not be the same without Sherry's contributions.

If anyone deserves this award, it is Sherry Southard as she has diligently labored to develop ingenious teaching methods for distance education and share this information with the educational community. She possesses tremendous vision and dedication to improving the quality of online instruction.

Thank you for the opportunity to write this letter of recommendation for Sherry, an educator's educator, and a most deserving candidate. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you need any further information.

Thank you,

Doris Rachles
Program Director Paralegal/Legal Studies
South University, Savannah, Georgia