

30 September 2023

To Whom It Concerns:

I am writing in support of the promotion of Jesse Stommel. I will comment primarily on his superb teaching. His teaching of course has impacts on his excellent service and research and many of his numerous publications demonstrate his skills as a teacher.

Jesse and I have worked together as teachers for many years. We taught English 3000, Shakespeare for non-majors, for 12 years together at the University of Colorado. And in 2015, we co-taught a MOOC (Massive Open Online Course) for some 22,000 students world-wide. We subsequently taught a long weekend course, Shakespearience, the next year in which we organized lectures and watched plays at the American Players Theatre in Wisconsin. I have also observed him as teacher of record numerous times over the last 20+ years.

Watching Jesse in action as a teacher, be it in person or in a hybrid class or online, is a wonderful experience. He draws students into conversation easily and they discuss knotty topics and issues with superb insights and common sense. This skill, in drawing students into the classroom conversation in any format, is formidable. And it results in excellent work by students.

I have observed his teaching of composition courses. His skills in leading these classes are remarkable. He quite simply brings out the best in student writing, sometimes to the surprise of the student writer. I was fortunate enough to observe the final symposium in a Queer Rhetorics class that Jesse led. The projects exceeded any expectations I might have had and I know it is because Jesse understands not only where the student writer \*is but where they have come from and, significantly, where they could go, with encouragement. He encourages. The student writer thrives.

I was a university professor for 50 years and won over 25 teaching awards myself. Jesse Stommel is one of the 3 best teachers I have ever observed. In recent years, I have been privileged to follow his work as a teacher in symposia, workshops, and seminars, many of which had to be online.

Jesse Stommel should be promoted.

Sincerely yours,

Professor R L Widmann  
Retired from CUBoulder English