

December 2, 2021

Dear Professorship Committee Members,

I am writing to recommend Dr. Chris Castille for the Gerald Gaston Endowed Professorship being offered by the College of Business Administration (CBA) at Nicholls State University. Dr. Castille is an Assistant Professor at Nicholls in the Department of Management and Marketing. During his tenure at Nicholls, Dr. Castille has exemplified what an engaging faculty member should be in the areas of teaching, research and service. He is dedicated to innovation and engagement in all three of these areas in order to meaningfully contribute to the mission of the CBA at Nicholls State University.

As an industrial/organizational psychologist, Dr. Castille is leveraging his expertise in people analytics to help Nicholls find novel ways to retain students and help them capture high quality jobs in Louisiana. Notably, there are two initiatives he has started that align with the CBA's mission and promote student success:

1. Leveraging his expertise in attrition modeling (i.e., predicting who is going to leave and organization and when), There are two questions that are relevant to the CBA:
 - a. What internal activities help retain students (particularly students who are at risk of leaving Nicholls, such as minority students and first-generation college students)? This is relevant to the CBA because retaining – and ultimately graduating – such students enhances and expands our alumni network beyond legacy pools. This is clearly aligned with Goal 1 (Increase recognition, image and visibility), specifically objective 1.4 (Enhance and expand the CBA alumni network).
 - b. What internal activities and student characteristics predict the quality of jobs captured after graduation, particular 4- and 5-star jobs (which inform institutional funding)? This is relevant to the CBA because it helps us understand what developmental experiences are crucial to helping our students capture valuable jobs in the local (i.e., Louisiana) economy. Work done here is clearly aligned with Goal 2 (Enhance existing degrees/programs and develop new academic initiatives).

2. Leveraging his broader skillset in people analytics, Dr. Castille is working with a colleague on two sets of initiatives for the HR concentration in the CBA that should enhance the impact of the program:
 - a. Create a dashboard that allows us to answer certain key questions for our HR majors.
 - b. Build a mentoring program that puts our alumni in touch with current students, helping both to build strong ties to Nicholls State University. This is clearly aligned with both objectives for Goal 4 (Enhance student services and development) which involve enhancing the advising/mentoring experience and enhancing opportunities for real-world experiences, professional development, and career placement.

These initiatives, developed by Dr. Castille, are just a small portion of his contributions to the CBA at Nicholls. He is also very effective in the classroom, as is illustrated in his student evaluations. In addition, he is an active member of numerous committees at the department, college, and university level. Dr. Castille also represents the CBA on the Faculty Senate at Nicholls. Finally, he is a prolific writer, with seven refereed research publications in the last five years.

In sum, I believe that Dr. Castille's dedication to teaching, research and service at Nicholls makes him an excellent candidate for the Gerald Gaston Endowed Professorship. If you should have any questions or would like to discuss Dr. Castille's accomplishments with me, please do not hesitate to contact me at 985-640-2616 or via email at shari.lawrence@nicholls.edu.

Sincerely,

Shari Lawrence
Professor of Finance
Paul Callais Endowed Professor