

November 30, 2019

Dear Selection Committee,

As a former student, I write to highly recommend Michael Katell for teaching positions at your university. In Spring 2017, Mr. Katell taught my lab section for a class on Information and Ethics Policy (INFO 450) at The Information School, University of Washington. This core Informatics undergraduate course seeks to develop thinking around ethical, legal, economic and socio-political issues related to information, information technologies and the information industry. This important class was the single required ethics course for students of this technical degree and for many it was the only opportunity to deeply consider the implications of the information and technology systems they were learning to build.

As a teacher for our lab section, Mr. Katell adeptly guided us in translating and deeply considering the course material from lectures, further developing our critical thinking through class exercises, discussions, debates and paper submissions. As a student who was already engaged in research projects relating to research ethics, I appreciated his depth of knowledge on the topics and his ability to support deeper learning, much of which I readily applied to my research. At the beginning of the quarter, I heard from a number of students about their reluctance to accept the importance of this class material in the context of a technical major. I witnessed how Mr. Katell's approach and teaching style made significant impacts in their thinking and, by the end of the quarter, former skeptics were connecting with the core concepts and real-world applications. With a very accessible, fair teaching style he created a comfortable learning environment where classroom expectations were clear and students were equally engaged in discussions in a meaningful, thoughtful way. I really appreciated his command of the course material and his ability to relate it to relevant topics that kept us all thinking deeply throughout the quarter and, for me, in ways that continue to impact my thinking today.

Throughout the class and even after the quarter ended, Mr. Katell was a kind, engaged teacher who didn't hesitate to respond to requests for further conversation and guidance. Once I completed my Informatics degree and was accepted into the Information School's Ph.D. program, he met with me to discuss the program and his research experiences. This encouragement positively impacted my decision to accept the offer and continue with my research in graduate school, focusing on research ethics within indigenous communities.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

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