April 28, 2009

Professor Benton,

I first off want to say what an enjoyable experience this semester has been for me to have taken your class. I feel I learned more from your class than I would have learned from one of the other faculty. This is because you brought a new style of teaching to the table, one where the students don't have to be worried more about passing the test or doing well on that one particular programming assignment just to keep their grades afloat. Your method of teaching was so relaxed that I was not pressured to just learn the material for the exam or the programming assignment at hand, but because I truly take an interest in computer workings and I learned so much because of it. Just one thing I think you could do differently next year is to maybe have a more structured "lecture time" where you present some programming tips and show the class how to write more code than you showed us. You could do this one day a week in addition to one presentation of work and critique day and a "lab" day where we work on our skills as programmers in maybe some in class exercise where you give us a problem and we have to solve it right there.
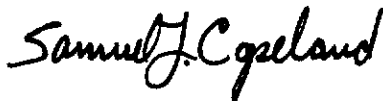
Now, based on your grade system I choose my own grade, I would like to ask for an A in this class. I would like to ask for this grade not because I did well on the exams and not because I am a fully qualified programmer now having just completed this class. I would like to ask for this grade because it shows the kind of hard working, diligent person that I am. Also because, I feel it accurately reflects the things I have learned this semester. That is because, I went from knowing nothing about visual basic programming in January to being able to in some manner

work my way through a programming project not without some minor challenges but with some since of relative ease. As I have seen on one of your tee shirts this semester something to the effect of "One in ten understand binary". I now can say I am one of those people. Also your class has through my listening to you and the voices of peers alike learned more about object-oriented programming and knowledge based systems than I ever thought I would be able to comprehend. Because of what you have taught me this semester I feel getting this grade is a fair representation of the knowledge I have gained in this subject which will carry through not in the Integrated Science and Technology courses I am endeavoring to take in the future but in the College of Business classes I am going to be taking for my minor curriculum. Receiving this grade will mean to me not only that I am fully capable of completing my minor courses in the subsequent two years of my time here at James Madison but that I am despite the grades I receive in other classes learning so much while taking classes in preparation for that all important goal of graduating in two years with a degree and then going off trying to look for work.

The receiving of this A as a grade in this class I can't imagine having any negative affect on someone else searching for the same thing that I am, partly because I am not going to become a computer programmer. I am working towards the goal of working either for the government or a medium to large company working on computer networks and possibly even working in a completely different field all together from the computer field in the field of my major as of this past February History. Working for the federal government in Washington, DC in the National Archives for example would also be very pleasing to me. I digress, however, I

don't feel my grade in this one course here would ever have a adverse affect on someone else because of the area of study I am focusing in.

It is hard for me to believe that this semester is for all intensive purposes over as of tomorrow's class, and the final exam next Wednesday. It was a very good semester for me I hope it was as beneficial to you as it has been to me. One of the most important things you have taught me this semester with programming in visual basic is to take a project and examine the question at hand, if need be break it up into more manageable pieces. Before now I was just diving in and working on a class project without really looking at it and examining the problem. In another way not thinking about it at all just doing it and turning it in. So, thank-you for teaching me that it will serve in computer work as well as all other fields of work I wind up in. This has been a very fun and enjoyable semester for me and I thank-you so much for being my teacher as well as a guide through this course.

Samuel J. Copeland

Samuel J. Copeland