

To whom it may concern,

I first met Dr. Uttl two years ago when I was looking for a way to improve my chances of getting into a graduate school for psychology. I was directed to see him, as he was new to the University and interested in opening a research lab. When I met him, he was cordial and asked me several questions about my abilities in statistics, psychology, computer skills, and academic background. I told him that I was not proficient in any of these areas, being an average student of psychology and having little or no skill with the necessary computer programs, such as SPSS and Microsoft Office. He simply asked me if I was willing to learn, and told me that I could work in his lab if I showed dedication to becoming a better student and researcher.

Dr. Uttl runs his lab with a hands-on approach. He is constantly available to answer questions and explain concepts. He expects students to do work, but never leaves them stranded. He is also very flexible in allowing assistants to design their own projects. Beyond just being flexible, he encourages the students in the lab to think for themselves, to understand what they are doing, and why. The lab only runs interesting and necessary research projects that further the student's understanding of core psychological concepts. Though the research project is the main focus of the lab, Dr. Uttl emphasizes and teaches computer, time management, and organizational skills to the research assistants. It is my belief that a research assistant in Dr. Uttl's lab will be prepared for graduate research and will know what to expect, and demand, from a competent graduate school research instructor.

Dr. Uttl made it clear that a benefit of working in the lab would be co-authorship of papers and presentations if an assistant put in enough effort on the project to warrant it. In my time in the lab, I saw Dr. Uttl give publishing credit to students who had earned it. Dr. Uttl treated myself and other assistants as partners in creating and publishing research.

In my academic career at Oregon State University, I was never more favorably impressed with an instructor than I was with Dr. Uttl. He was one of the few that made an "A" grade actually mean that the student had superior understanding of a subject. His classes used state of the art teaching techniques and he was always available outside of class to answer questions. Using listserves for studying helped the students learn the subject while giving them knowledge of technology. I learned the core material of each course I took from him, along with the application of the subject beyond the textbook. I spent many hours outside of class in his office going over materials, and he was always available.

Dr. Uttl was instrumental in updating the computer lab in the OSU psychology department. In my first years as an OSU undergraduate, we had to make due with outdated 286 computers running outdated statistical programs like statgraphics. Even if we were taught how to use the programs flawlessly, it was useless knowledge. Dr. Uttl recognized this, and though he had to give up personal time, he persuaded administration of the need for updating the equipment. As the first computer lab assistant, I saw the struggles to get the computer lab changed into a useable and necessary facility. Dr. Uttl gave more than his fair share in time and labor to make sure that students would have the necessary skills and knowledge to compete for graduate school. He changed the status quo for the students at OSU.

As compared to the rest of the OSU psychology department faculty, Dr. Uttl constantly has shown himself to be one of, if not the best, professor for a multitude of reasons. Besides the reasons mentioned above, Dr. Uttl is simply and genuinely interested in seeing students succeed. There is no greater or more necessary quality in a college professor. My personal college career was completely different before and after working with Dr. Uttl. The OSU psychology department is a place where students can be set adrift very easily, left on their own and discouraged from attaining any education or profession beyond what can be learned out of text books. In my experience, there is not much faculty push for students to be involved outside of class. Unfortunately, that does not provide much of a future for the student body. Having worked with Dr. Uttl, my education blossomed and my opportunities increased beyond what I had ever entertained. Dr. Uttl encouraged me to work towards the highest goals I desired, and often told the lab assistants that they could achieve whatever they wanted. Though there are professors in the department that I have too little knowledge of to disparage, I feel that the vast majority of what is positive in my education at OSU came from interactions with and learning from Dr. Uttl, and very little came from the rest of the department.

Finally, I believe that our education is best measured not by our GPA's or our accolades, but how that knowledge translates in the real world. As a professional who works with therapists, administrators, and other clinicians of all education levels and in both private and public practice, I have the unique opportunity to be involved in almost every facet of the psychology community. I also work with clients. I believe that I am effective in all of these arenas directly because of the education I received from Dr. Uttl. My understanding of statistics, therapies, research, and theories has been invaluable in my work settings. The other side of being an effective professional is critical thinking and organizational skills. Again, I feel as though Dr. Uttl has played an invaluable part in helping me develop those skills and an effective work ethic. Whether I am making administrative decisions based on data or working with an individual client on specific skill sets, I always seem to draw on something that I learned from Dr. Uttl. The job I now hold allows me the experiences with psychology and the monetary compensation that should come with being a degree holding professional. In fact, the work I do requires more advanced skills than one would likely get in any undergraduate program, yet I have attained these abilities principally through work with Dr. Uttl. I sincerely believe that I would not have the skills to hold a job of this level without the teaching and experience of working with Dr. Uttl.

The psychology department at Oregon State University will only benefit from having a world-class researcher and instructor such as Dr. Uttl. Both in terms of what he brings to the department and to the individual college careers of students, I feel that Dr. Uttl is an asset that the University and should be kept as faculty at all costs. Certainly my success has its roots in having been a student and assistant to Dr. Uttl, and I hope that other students have the opportunity to share in that success.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Cory VanAlstine". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Cory VanAlstine
Consumer Affairs Specialist
Accountable Behavioral Health Alliance
Managed Care Mental Health Organization