

January 27, 2002

Dear Sir or Madam:

I am aware that Dr. Uttl is being considered for tenure this year, and I am writing to express my personal opinion on the matter. I would have liked to share my views and experiences as a member of his student tenure committee, but unfortunately, I was denied the opportunity to do so.

I first became acquainted with Dr. Uttl while visiting his Cognition Research Lab as Vice-President of the OSU Psychology Society during the fall of 2000. I spoke with him about the PSY340 Cognition course that I would be taking under his instruction the following term. Dr. Uttl was very willing to answer all of my questions regarding his course. He also offered some suggestions that helped to further prepare me for PSY340.

I completed PSY340 during the Winter 2001 term, and I must say that I thoroughly enjoyed Dr. Uttl's course. The presented information was very fascinating and up-to-date. Aside from the interesting course content, I was impressed at how well the course was structured and designed. We were given a syllabus that clearly outlined our responsibilities. I was never in doubt as to what was expected of me as a student taking this class. I also found it helpful that Dr. Uttl created a class list server. This was the first time that I have had a professor create a list server for a course. This list server was a way for students to communicate with Dr. Uttl, as well as each other (e.g. one student could email his/her question to the list serve, and any other student could respond). Dr. Uttl also made his lecture overheads available to us on his website. These overheads were always available before the lecture, and they were very helpful during class. They made note taking much easier, and it was actually possible to listen to what was being said, rather than only writing it down. Another thing that distinguished Dr. Uttl from any other psychology professor I have had was that he was very interested in involving his students during class discussions. I have never had a professor in the psychology department *invite* student comment during class lectures. He never failed to ask the class if we had any questions on the material or needed any points clarified. Dr. Uttl's course was very interactive, unlike any psychology course I have taken before. Overall, I was very impressed with Dr. Uttl's teaching ability, knowledge, organization, and interest in his students.

As I neared the completion of my graduation requirements, I began researching graduate schools in psychology. In doing so, I realized that I had no applicable experience in my field of interest, as required by the majority of schools with distinguished graduate programs. Having had such a positive experience in Dr. Uttl's PSY340 course, I approached him to express an interest in joining his Cognition Research Lab the following year. After we discussed how the research I would be doing in the lab applied to my future goals, Dr. Uttl agreed that working as an assistant in his lab would be beneficial.

After I had arranged to work in Dr. Uttl's lab the following fall, I began researching possible topics for my honors thesis. After discussing some of these ideas by Dr. Uttl, I found that we had many of the same areas of interest. I asked him if he would be my honors thesis mentor, and he agreed. I am currently designing my thesis experiment, and Dr. Uttl has been instrumental in giving me the proper guidance in the development of my research project.

I began working in Dr. Uttl's lab last term, and I am currently enrolled for nine credits under his supervision. I spend approximately 27 hours per week in the lab. Nine hours are devoted to research (PSY401), nine hours are being applied toward my honors thesis (PSY 403), and nine hours are allotted toward a project and conference presentation I am working on with another student (PSY405). Since I have been working in the lab, I have learned a number of new skills and concepts and have been given a number of opportunities that I would not otherwise have. For example, I have been trained to administer several professional neuropsychological tests (e.g., Verbal Paired Associates and Verbal Learning Test from the Wechsler Memory Scale, the Phonemic Fluency Test, Reaction Time and Card Sorting tasks, Figure of Rey, etc.), and have run over 30 subjects thus far. I have started to learn how to use SPSS, a statistical program used by many graduate schools and professionals. I have also noticed that my computer skills in general have dramatically improved. Moreover, I am now able to efficiently use the research resources that are available to me as a student (e.g., the Valley Library's OASIS, various research databases, Interlibrary Loan (ILL) and the ORBIS system).

Working in the lab has given me a lot of hands-on experience. I have been given the opportunity by Dr. Uttl to not only learn new things, but to also apply the things in which I have already learned. I have been given an opportunity that many serious psychology students do not receive until they have entered graduate school (it is usually graduate students that work as lab assistants). The experiences that I will cumulate as a result of working in Dr. Uttl's lab will give me an extreme advantage when I apply to graduate school next fall.

Being a student that has had experience with Dr. Uttl in the classroom, as well as outside of the classroom, I feel that Dr. Uttl is a definite asset to Oregon State University. He takes his job very seriously, and he does it well. I would definitely argue in favor of his becoming a tenured faculty member.

Sincerely,

*Christina R. Newman*

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