

**Dr. Stephen A. Raynie
Gordon State College
Portfolio for the 2017 Felton Jenkins, Jr. Hall of Fame Faculty Award**

Table of Contents

Letter of Support from C. Jeffrey Knighton, Provost and Vice President for Student Affairs.....	1-2
Brief Curriculum Vitae.....	3-5
Teaching and Learning Philosophy, Strategies, and Objectives.....	6-7
Summary of Innovative Teaching Artifacts or Practices that Promote Student Success.....	8
Sample Assignment 1: Research Paper.....	9-10
Sample Assignment 2: Scholarship Application Letter.....	10-11
Sample Assignment 3: Video Analysis Essay.....	11-12
Sample Class Activity: Understanding a Video.....	13
Sample Student Engagement Activity: Bonus Bucks.....	13
Student Letter of Support from Alana Roberts.....	14
Student Letter of Support from Brandon French.....	15
Student Letter of Support from Dlorah Bush.....	16
Letter of Support from Dr. Ed Whitelock, Head of the Department of Humanities.....	17-18
Letter of Support from Dr. Anna Higgins, Colleague.....	19-20



Gordon State College
University System of Georgia

ACADEMIC AFFAIRS

419 College Drive
Barnesville, GA 30204
678. 359. 5018 f. 678. 359. 5365
www.gordonstate.edu

November 28, 2016

University System of Georgia
270 Washington Street, SW
Atlanta, GA 30334-1450

Re: Dr. Stephen A. Raynie

Regents' Felton Jenkins Teaching Award Committee:

It is my honor to recommend Dr. Stephen A. Raynie for the Felton Jenkins Teaching Award. I have had the privilege of knowing and learning from Dr. Raynie since 2006, as a colleague and for the past two years as the Provost at Gordon State College. During that time I have worked with Dr. Raynie in numerous capacities—an English Professor, the Coordinator of the Academic Contest (I was his assistant), the Chair of the Faculty Senate (again, I was his secretary), the Division Chair of the Humanities Division, and most recently as the Director of GSC's ACCESS Institute and Learning Support programs. No matter how Dr. Raynie is serving our students, he has consistently risen above his colleagues. His dedication to our students, energy and passion in teaching, and constant efforts to improve make Dr. Steve Raynie the ideal candidate for this award.

There are many reasons why Dr. Raynie is worthy of this award. First of all, he pays incredible attention to *how* he teaches his courses, ensuring the content is meaningful to his students. For example, one of his assignments is a "Scholarship Application Letter" which students are expected to actually submit. Or we could focus on his dedication to constantly improving his teaching, by encouraging student feedback in addition to performance measures. But perhaps the most important measure of Dr. Raynie's dedication is what he does *outside* of the classroom. There is no doubt that he spends upward of 70 hours each week working with his students. As the Director of the ACCESS Institute (and an instructor/advisor), he spends countless hours with students who are underprepared for college-level work. His goal is to transform access into success for these students, so he works one-on-one with each student to assist each with their unique challenges. Many students now face brighter futures due to Dr. Raynie's patience and dedication.

As I mentioned at the beginning of this letter, it is indeed an honor to recommend Dr. Steve Raynie for this award. I consider Gordon State College's students fortunate that someone of his commitment is working for them, and I consider myself fortunate that I can hold Dr. Raynie up as someone whom other faculty members can emulate. The Board of Regents would be hard-pressed to find a more deserving recipient of this honor, so I recommend Dr. Stephen A. Raynie for the Regents' Felton Jenkins Teaching Award without any reservations.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "C. Jeffery Knighton". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent initial "C".

C. Jeffery Knighton, Ph.D.
Provost & Vice President for Academic Affairs

Stephen A. Raynie, Ph.D.
111 Honeysuckle Lane
Barnesville, GA 30204
(678) 551-3631
sraynie@gordonstate.edu

EDUCATION

Louisiana State University
Doctor of Philosophy in English (2000)
Dissertation: Francis Hayman Reading Literature in the 1740s

Georgia College and State University
Master of Arts in Teaching (2009)

University of Missouri-Kansas City
Master of Arts in English (1996)

University of Illinois-Urbana
Bachelor of Arts in English (1984)

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

2010 to present	Professor of English, Gordon State College
2005 to 2010	Associate Professor of English, Gordon State College
2001 to 2005	Assistant Professor of English, Gordon State College
1999 to 2000	Instructor, Louisiana State University
1995 to 1996	Graduate Teaching Assistant, University of Missouri-Kansas City

LEADERSHIP TRAINING

2016	John Maxwell Seminar
2014	Leadership Lamar (The Fanning Institute at the University of Georgia)

COURSES TAUGHT

COLQ 2991 (one course on Ayn Rand and *Atlas Shrugged* and another on dystopian novels)
ENGL 0989 (Rewrote and taught course 2016)
ENGL 1101 (Composition I)
ENGL 1102 (Composition II)
ENGL 2111 (World Literature I)
ENGL 2112 (World Literature II)
ENGL 2121 (British Literature I)
ENGL 2122 (British Literature II)

ENGL 3230 (Restoration and Eighteenth-Century British Literature)
ENGL 4800 (Curriculum and Methods in English/Language Arts)
GFYE 0097 (Gordon First Year Experience)

RECENT INSTITUTIONAL AND STATE SERVICE

2015 to present Access Coordinator (includes learning support and the ACCESS Institute)

- Revised English 0989
- Improved scheduling options to promote course access
- Increased ACCESS Institute enrollment
- Led program development (ACCESS Institute)
- Demonstrated viability of new access pathway
- Liaised with Admissions to select candidates for the program
- Guided program approval through the Faculty Senate

2016-2017 QEP Steering Committee (First Things First)

2016-2017 Faculty Senator

2016-2017 Faculty Welfare Committee

2015-2017 Academic Policy Committee

2015-2017 Admissions, Advisement, Registration, Retention, and Financial Aid
Committee

2016 Humanities Department Faculty Workload Task Force

2015 Co-Chair, Good Academic Standing Task Force

2015 Excused Absence Task Force

2014 English Education Task Force to Revise Rule 505-3-.17 (Professional
Standards Commission)

RECENT GRANTS

Project Leader, Building a Bridge to College English (\$10,000, funded by Race to the Top funds through the University System of Georgia Board of Regents, summer 2013 to summer 2014). The project aligned English 1101 and 1102 with the Common Core Georgia Performance Standards by developing a series of unit plans in collaboration with local education stakeholders. Faculty members taught in Lamar County High School, and those teachers observed Gordon State College classes. The project also included a professional development workshop that included over twenty Gordon State College faculty members and local teachers.

PUBLICATIONS

"Selling the English BA Program," *South Atlantic Review* 78.1-2 (spring 2015): 76-94.

"Using Web Portfolios to Motivate Students," *Academic Exchange Quarterly* 9.2 (summer 2005): 136-140.

"Eve's Assertion of Independence in Francis Hayman's Illustrations for *Paradise Lost*," *Studies in English Literature* 44.3 (summer 2004): 545-70.

"Intermediality and the 'Necessary Connection' in Fuseli's *Remarks on the Writings and Conduct of J.J. Rousseau*," *1650-1850: Ideas, Aesthetics, and Inquiries in the Early Modern Era*, Vol. 6. Ed. Kevin L. Cope. New York: AMS Press, 2001. 299-315.

"The Woman's Body and the Obstacle of Specious Honor in Donne's 'The Flea'," *English Language Notes* 38.3 (March 2001): 40-52.

"Hayman and Gravelot's Anti-*Pamela* Designs for Richardson's Octavo Edition of *Pamela I and II*," *Eighteenth-Century Life* 23.3 (November 1999): 77-93.

PROFESSIONAL SERVICE

Book Review Editor, *New Perspectives on the Eighteenth Century* (2015 to present)

RECENT PRESENTATIONS

"The Untenable Ethics of Access," South Atlantic Modern Language Association, November 3-6, 2016, Jacksonville, Florida.

"Teaching Milton Through Illustrations," Southeast American Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies, February 25-27, 2016, Savannah, Georgia.

Poster Presentation and talk to USG representatives, "Building a Bridge to College English," USG Enrollment Management Symposium, October 16, 2015.

"Using Music Videos to Help Students Transition to Analytical Reading," Teaching Matters, Gordon State College, Barnesville, Georgia, March 27, 2015.

"Selling an English Program," South Atlantic Modern Language Association, November 8-10, 2013, Atlanta, Georgia.

"Building a Bridge to College English," East Meets West: College Readiness in Rural Georgia, October 17-18, 2013, Americus, Georgia.

"Standards and Assessments Update and *How to Align College-Level Courses to the Common Core GPS* (with Sandi Woodall, Georgia Department of Education), July 16-17, 2013, Race to the Top Summit, Georgia Association of Educational Leaders, Jekyll Island, Georgia.

Stephen Raynie's Teaching and Learning Philosophy, Strategies, and Objectives

A long time ago, I took a Dale Carnegie course, and one of the principles that stands out for me is: "people do not care what you know until they know you care about them." From that tiny seed of an idea springs whole philosophies about how people ought to get along with one another, and few relationships are as important as the ones we have with our students. Students trust us with the bright visions they have for their futures, and it falls to us to be engaged and enthusiastic, not just about our fields of expertise, but also about our students as people. Teaching is a privilege, a passionate calling, and a profound responsibility.

I am proud to say that I teach at an access institution, Gordon State College. It is a place where students are less sure of their abilities at first, a place where people are transformed and made to flourish. Since many of our students are the first in their families to attend college, this flourishing extends to whole families and will play out over the course of generations. One of the great pleasures I have as the coordinator of Gordon's Access Institute is seeing the look of pride and hope in the faces of students and their families on orientation day. That trust I see is truly humbling.

Our student evaluations could really come down to a single statement: "my instructor makes me feel important." The way people respond to that statement contains more information about leadership and teaching effectiveness than any other single piece of evidence. There is no secret method to good teaching; just treat students like they are important. Know their names, listen to them, respect them, and communicate with them honestly. Once they feel valued, they will work hard to master whatever an instructor puts before them. It is only in the context of this trusting relationship that real growth can occur. Once students know an instructor cares, they listen. Honest feedback becomes effective, and students learn.

This approach means students perform at a higher standard than they otherwise would. My courses are always challenging: I never shy away from significant amounts of reading, as the students in my eighteenth-century British literature class would attest. My class on the seventeenth-century poet and statesman John Milton covers more than the usual poetic highlights like *Paradise Lost*. It also includes his significant prose tracts on individual liberty, the relationship between church and state, and freedom of the press. The reading builds a context for students that improves critical thinking because tracing someone else's argument refines their own approach. Beyond the content of the course, they learn that there are no shortcuts to understanding. They learn to think their ideas through all the way to the end in light of all the available evidence.

I also like assessments to be authentic. In English 1101, I ask students to write a scholarship application letter based on the instructions available to them at the Gordon Foundation web site. This exercise makes them aware of how purpose and audience interact to produce good rhetoric. From there, I ask them to analyze a music video they choose as a bridge to working with more complex texts. This assignment builds

motivation, and it helps students think critically about work in all of their classes. The assignment reaches students where they are and prepares them for a level of engagement suitable for contributing to a variety of fields.

In my English 1102 courses, moreover, the research paper is not simply a gathering of information about a topic. The purpose of a research paper is to find the answer to a research question, and this process entails research, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation. I ask students to find a number of possible answers to a research question and reason through which answer or combination of answers is best. As is frequently the case in life, there is often no clear, single, best answer since data are incomplete; usually the best answer is something like more research needs to be done because the facts are inadequate. Thus students learn to search for truth. They learn that answers to important questions must be pursued.

Students in all of my classes best meet significant challenges when they have a clear course. Thus a grading standards sheet exists for each written assignment, and part of the student's grade is based on his or her own evaluation. When students are honest, the grades they award to themselves are often very similar to the grades they get from me. My work is to empower them, to turn over to them the authority for assessment in an authentic way, for throughout their lives they will often have to create complex documents on their own with little feedback prior to submission.

Perhaps most importantly, as a teacher, I am also a learner. As the Access Coordinator at Gordon State College for the past year and a half, I have struggled to understand the relatively low pass rates in math foundations courses. In order to learn about the students' lived experience in Foundations for College Algebra, therefore, I applied to the college, following all of the same procedures that any other applicant would. I registered for the course this fall for a real grade: I go to class, take notes, complete the homework, and sit for the exams. It is the first part of a broader phenomenological study, an attempt to get inside the issue of low math pass rates so that we can work to improve them. I am an English professor, but I am also a student of my students: my subject matter expertise is not only seventeenth- and eighteenth-century British literature, but the perceptions and learning potential of my students. It is a simple strategy: understand students where they are so that they can more easily follow the course I chart for them.

All of these factors contribute to a clear set of objectives: students who finish one of my courses can make their thinking visible. They are able to move their academic and professional careers forward because they can write well for a variety of audiences in a number of contexts. They move forward in their careers because businesses and other organizations hire people to solve problems, not explain why they cannot be solved. Students make a transition from being knowledge consumers to knowledge producers, and they come to understand that the purpose of college is not to learn what to do, but to learn how to figure out what to do. That difference is measured by critical thinking ability, and it manifests in multiple contexts throughout their lives.

Stephen Raynie's Summary of Innovative Teaching Artifacts or Practices that Promote Student Success

Innovative teaching means more than using the latest technology. It means being open to learning how students learn. It is an attitude of continuous improvement, a search for new ways to promote success, not just for students in a general way, but for each student as an individual. It means constant adaptation and experimentation, and it means understanding the human interaction that occurs in a classroom.

To encourage class discussion, I hand out bonus bucks, a small tangible reward that students can put in their wallets. The reinforcement is intermittent: I do not hand them out every day, but they are worth a point, and students save them up and staple them to the final exam at the end of the course. I also hold students accountable for their learning. In my lower-level classes especially, I ask students to summarize everything I ask them to read. It is not just a matter of their showing me that they have read what I have assigned. It is a reading comprehension strategy: as an access institution, Gordon State students need to learn how to read in an academic setting. This idea carries over into my course redesign for ENGL 0989, Foundations for English Composition. My new course for our learning support program includes units specifically for reading and writing in the natural sciences and social sciences as well as in the humanities. If we are truly concerned with student success, then in addition to showing students how to explicate a poem, we should teach them how to read their biology textbook and reason like a historian.

One innovative teaching practice that often gets overlooked is instructor access. Having a smart phone with the ability to respond to email promptly sends a powerful message to students that they are important. It reinforces the supportive, coaching role of the instructor; it is not enough to provide detailed instructions for an assignment online somewhere. It is certainly necessary, but good communication also means making the same message available in several formats at several times. Thus access is not simply the mission of Gordon State College, but also the attitude of its instructors. Innovative access means being available outside of the classroom and outside of physical office hours, for students at institutions like Gordon State College often work long hours and have children. Innovative access means thinking beyond the traditional workday just as our students do in their attempts to transform their lives.

Innovation applies to assessment as well, and it is an effective tool for student learning. I empower students, for example, by teaching them how to assess their own work by having them complete a grading standards sheet for each assignment. Doing so promotes the transfer to other courses of the skills they learn. Assessment also needs to be authentic in order to motivate students to excel. Assigning a scholarship application letter, for example, is a practical way to get students to apply what I am teaching. It makes a clear connection between purpose and audience, and it carries with it the potential to fund the student's education, boosting the odds of graduation.

Stephen Raynie's Evidence of Teaching Excellence

My web site contains syllabi for my current courses:

http://faculty.gordonstate.edu/sraynie/page_one.htm.

Sample Assignment 1: Research Paper

Rationale for Inclusion: This assignment emphasizes in a creative way the higher order thinking skills of analysis, synthesis, and evaluation by finding an answer to a research question. Students rarely have trouble finding information today; the issue here is helping them determine what information is reliable and what is not.

In an essay of about 2500 words, produce a documented research paper testing the validity of a conspiracy theory. You will need to do research to find *at least* eight sources, including a minimum of one book or scholarly essay from a peer-reviewed journal. In addition to the essay, please submit the works cited page in the form of an annotated bibliography. Be sure to use M.L.A. style citation. [Click here for a sample outline.](#)

Choose a general topic from the list below if you like before focusing on a narrow, specific research question:

- 1) The Kennedy assassination
- 2) UFOs and Roswell
- 5) CIA drug trafficking
- 6) AIDS a government plot
- 10) Fake moon landings
- 12) MLK assassination
- 13) Vince Foster death
- 16) Princess Diana death
- 19) TWA Flight 800
- 21) Marilyn Monroe's death
- 24) Is Paul McCartney dead?

If none of these general topics interests you, then please ask me to write about one that does. Please note that a mystery (i.e., the existence of bigfoot or Atlantis) is not the same as a conspiracy.

Keys to success:

- 1) Because the paper is so short, be sure to focus it very narrowly.
- 2) Be sure to use correct M.L.A. style citation.
- 3) Choose an interesting title that reflects the content of the paper.
- 4) Write the paper using academic language conventions in accordance with the minimum standards sheet attached to the syllabus.
- 5) Be certain that the paper fully meets the requirements of the assignment.
- 6) Do not stop looking for information to answer the question just because the paper has the minimum eight sources—the purpose is to answer the question, and that process might take ten or twelve or even more sources.

Purpose

The purpose of a research paper is to answer a question about which you are curious, and the skills you develop in this paper will be broadly transferable to other work you do in your academic and professional life. You will also practice academic writing, analytical reasoning, proper documentation, close reading, summarizing complex written works, and especially, evaluative subtlety.

Nota Bene: The minimum number of sources for this assignment is eight, but since the purpose of a research paper is to find an answer to the research question, it does not make sense to stop looking for information *because* one has found eight sources; the goal is to find an answer to the question, not to do the minimum work required for the assignment. Papers need to have as many sources as necessary to evaluate all the possible answer the research question.

Audience

The audience for a research paper is the person asking the research question, but many others might be interested as well. Assume the audience for this paper is a group of well-educated people curious to consider answers your question.

Sample Assignment 2: Scholarship Application Letter

Rationale for Inclusion: This assignment is an authentic exercise. It asks students to apply what they have learned to fund their education through earning a scholarship.

Introduction

As a practical way to help you understand the interplay of purpose and audience in writing, I would like you to write a scholarship application letter that you can use in an effort to fund your education. The letter should be about 500 words (one page if single-spaced), and you should follow these instructions from the application:

Write a one-page essay describing your academic and career goals, how a scholarship from Gordon State College will help you achieve them, and why you feel that you should be awarded a scholarship. You may include information describing your personal circumstances concerning financial need. Please pay special attention to grammar and spelling.

You can find online a full list of available scholarships and the application at <http://www.gordonstate.edu/fndscholarships>.

Essential Elements

- Follow the organizational pattern suggested by the prompt.
- Fully develop one idea before moving on to the next, and fully develop the entire essay.
- Use specific, detailed language.
- Use the language conventions appropriate for an academic and professional audience.

Purpose

The purpose of this essay is to practice the rhetorical skills important to college and professional success.

Audience

The audience for this letter is the college committee charged with making scholarship award recommendations.

Sample Assignment 3: Video Analysis Essay

Rationale for Inclusion: We live in a largely visual culture, and this assignment helps students make a transition from being knowledge consumers to knowledge producers. It teaches skills they can later apply to the analysis of written texts.

Purpose

The media we consume to at least some degree shapes our values and what we desire. In this essay, I would like students to become aware of how those forces mediate and even generate cultural values. Becoming critically engaged—being able to both read a cultural text and evaluate it in writing—is a core attribute of successful students. In order to participate fully in shaping the direction of our culture, we must be able to understand the mechanics of how we are influenced. We must, to borrow an idea from

the Wizard of Oz, pull back the curtain to see how the man manipulates our experience of the world.

In this essay I ask you to decode and explicate a music video of your choosing. Pay special attention to how word and image interact; in a film, for example, each tends to reinforce the message of the other, resulting in an interpretive complexity that for many people occurs on a subconscious level. Here, as always, I would like you to make your thinking visible.

Sample graphic organizer: "Pretty Hurts."

Processes to Engage

- Analyze image, sound, and text to see how the pieces build upon each other.
- Inform the synthesis of image, sound, and text with the knowledge of how symbols are used in other contexts in classical art or literature.
- Evaluate image, sound, and text to build a comprehensive vision of what values the production promotes.
- Plan ahead so that adequate time can be devoted to thinking, composing, and revising.

Purpose

The purpose of this essay is to hone your analytical and close reading skills while you practice using the language conventions appropriate for an academic or professional audience.

Audience

The audience for this essay is a group of educated people interested in your thoughts regarding the text you are analyzing. The audience would like to read meaningful insights into what the text means, not what it is. In other words, the audience is not looking for a description or summary.

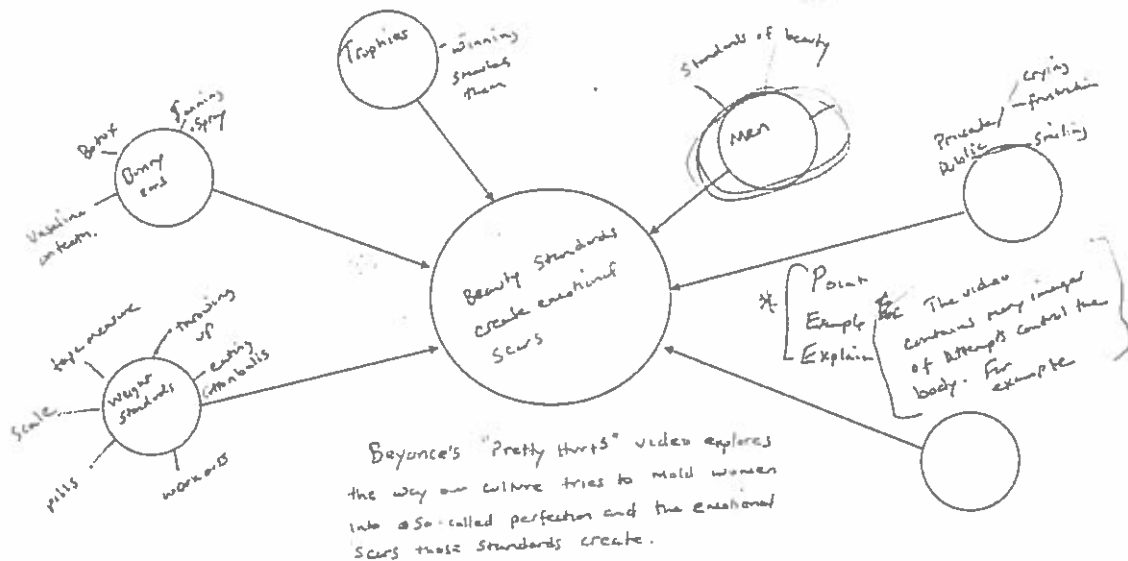
Sample Class Activity (Idea Development for the Video Analysis Essay)

Rationale for Inclusion: This activity demonstrates how students can organize their thinking in analyzing a text. It moves them from seeing the main idea of a music video to developing an argument thesis about it.

One Way to Understand and Write About a Story

Definitions:

- 1) A **theme** is one of the big ideas in a story. For example, one theme of the movie *Shrek* might be, "As soon as you become serious with someone, you find out he or she is an ogre."
- 2) A **symbol** is something that stands for more than what it literally is. For example, I mark papers in red ink because red stands for passion and love.
- 3) One can often create a good thesis by explaining how a set of symbols in a story contribute to the development of a theme.



Sample Student Engagement Activity: Reinforcement of Class Participation

Rationale for Inclusion: Intermittent reinforcement trains students to participate in class discussions. They earn a certificate for an appropriate, thoughtful contribution, and save them until the final exam. Students staple the accumulated certificates to the final for extra credit at the end of the course.



Dear Dr. Raynie,

I am incredibly proud of myself this semester. Throughout high school, I have taken honors and AP courses in language. I found them to be easy and honestly stupid. They never taught me how to use my deeper critical thinking skills. I remember my 11th grade year. I was taken AP Lang. She would have us read a chapter in a book and we would have a reading quiz the next day. The questions involved were simple questions. "Who killed blah blah blah?" I mean COME ON NOW! You challenged us. I put so much thought into all of my assignments. You related our learning with real-life. You were practical and intelligent. You gave every single person in our class a feeling of hope and belonging. I look back on my first three reflection grades and I had B's. I worked harder and my grade clearly was shown through my extra efforts.

Your class has truly taught me what being a good student is. I have learned how to take notes, how to write a paper, and how to make my thinking visible. I just wanted to thank you for having a passion for what you do. Thank you for not making fun of me when I get nervous getting up in front of the class. I have always been afraid of talking in front of people, but you have helped me slightly overcome that.

I know this sounds crazy, but you inspired me to chase after my dreams. I have always wanted to be a dental hygienist, but I was scared of failure. My senior year, I looked deeper into the career. I had to take chemistry and anatomy in college. All of these hard classes I felt I could not do. I felt like I was not smart enough. They said the program was competitive and it was hard to get into. I changed my mind. I knew that I could not get into the program, because I was not smart enough. Without knowing it, you gave me hope to pursue my dreams. Through the short stories we read about Frederick Douglass and all the others, it was extremely inspirational to me. Thank you for showing me I am smart enough and I can chase my dreams.

Sincerely,

Alana Roberts

Alana Roberts

To whom it may concern,

I have been privileged to take two classes under the guidance of Dr. Stephen Raynie. Simply put, Dr. Raynie is an exceptional instructor. To each class, he brought his wealth of experience, and he was happy to share this plethora with each student. His dedication to each student's success set him apart from his colleagues by assuring a personal and focused course. Now, as a graduate student at Western Carolina University, I recognize the lasting influence of Dr. Raynie's inspiring teaching methods.

During his senior level course, **Foundational Authors: John Milton**, Dr. Raynie employed an innovative and unique project to teach the many approaches possible to literature. By stepping outside the literary core, Dr. Raynie assigned a project that focused, not exactly on John Milton, but rather on the lasting influence his epic had on artistic expression. Each student was assigned an artist that illustrated the books of *Paradise Lost* and allowed to make a visual presentation of the artists' works alongside the corresponding epic narrative. Unlike most literature classes, this project assured each student the possibility to flourish and to learn by incorporating visual learning alongside traditional literature interpretation. This unique assignment brought new dimension to the epic that I had never imagined, and prepared me to embrace the many aspects of graduate Milton study.

Within the first few weeks of taking **English 641: John Milton**, my in-depth familiarity with Milton's prose and poetry was recognized by my professor, Dr. Mimi Fenton. She went on to ask, "What wonderful institution did you attend that allowed you so much access to Milton?" Proudly, I replied, "Gordon State College, under the instruction of Dr. Stephen Raynie." Her recognition of my aptitude with Milton's works is a direct reflection of Dr. Raynie's ability to do more than simply teach the prescribed material. Dr. Raynie goes beyond simply teaching literature, rather he instills lifelong knowledge that exceeds any text or classroom.

With all due respect,



Brandon French

November 10, 2016

Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia
270 Washington Street, SW, Atlanta, GA, 30334

Dear Members of the Board,

I am honored to write to you in support of Dr. Stephen Raynie's nomination for the Felton Jenkins, Jr. Hall of Fame Teaching Award. His dedication to the students of Gordon State College and his heart for making higher education attainable for the young people in the surrounding communities is extraordinary, and worthy to be commended.

As a graduate of both the University of Georgia and Gordon State, I have had the privilege of studying under many gifted professors. Dr. Raynie's style of teaching is unique in that it not only brought out the best in my abilities as a student, but it has also heavily influenced my own teaching style, and continues to do so every day.

Dr. Raynie's students never doubt his personal interest in their success. Despite his constant initiatives, his scholarly pursuits, and the multitude of other demands on his time, he makes it a priority to be accessible to every student and to concern himself with the struggles and successes that happen daily within his classroom. I enjoyed the balance of challenging assignments and consistent support within the structure of Dr. Raynie's courses. Practical techniques, honest constructive criticism, and genuine encouragement are a few of the elements that were so effectively imparted that they have continued to influence my career and contribute to my success as a teacher. Through his example, I learned that students thrive when they feel personally valued by their teacher and within the community of the classroom. Part of convincing our students of that value is to maintain high expectations while providing the unfailing support that it takes to reach them. Dr. Raynie extends this philosophy beyond his own classes to include all students at Gordon State and those within his scope of reach in our rural communities. His "Building a Bridge to College English" project is just one example of his passion to equip teachers to make college success a more attainable goal for students from all walks of life. Dr. Raynie is truly a model of excellence in dedication to our field.

Thank you for honoring with prestigious recognition those who spend their lives blessing others with the benefits of education. I highly recommend your consideration of Dr. Stephen Raynie for the distinction of this award.

Sincerely,

Lori Bush
Director of Theatre Activities
Pike County High School
Pike County Middle School
331 Pirate Drive, Zebulon, GA, 30295
bushl@pike.k12.ga.us



Gordon State College
University System of Georgia

DIVISION OF HUMANITIES

419 College Drive
Barnesville, GA 30204
678.359.5047 f. 678.359.5140
www.gordonstate.edu

18 November 2016

To the Members of the Board,

I can think of no one among my many colleagues more dedicated to his students and thereby more deserving of the Felton Jenkins, Jr. Hall of Fame Teaching Award than Dr. Steve Raynie.

I have worked with Dr. Raynie at Gordon State College since 2001 and have been, since 2010, his direct supervisor. During that time, Dr. Raynie has demonstrated an ongoing and ever-developing commitment to honing his teaching skills and methodologies in the service of helping his students to flourish. Dr. Raynie mixes pragmatism with creativity to embody a humanitarian approach to the classroom.

He constantly revises his course syllabi in order to devise assignments that do more than, simply, ask for demonstrations of basic competencies; rather, Dr. Raynie seeks to ground his students' work in real-world scenarios, engaging them in skill-building assignments that emphasize the practical importance of strong written-communication skills. He asks Composition I students to write letters of application for internships or scholarships for one assignment, then works on refining their critical reading skills through engagement in challenging rhetorical analysis. But Dr. Raynie does much more than fashion challenging assignments. He is no disaffected coach on the sidelines simply checking off who can or can't climb over the wall he has built; nor is he the kind of blind enabler who builds a ladder for his students so that they may clear that wall free of their own efforts. Rather, he seeks in his pedagogy to guide his students to problem solve for themselves, giving them room to stumble, while always encouraging them forward towards finding their answers. Not every student is successful, but most are, and they are prepared to move forward towards continued academic success when they have completed one of Dr. Raynie's courses.

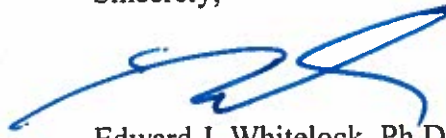
Dr. Raynie demonstrates his dedication to our students through significant work outside of the classroom as well. He has, these past two years, agreed to serve as Coordinator of Learning Support Programs on campus and has worked tirelessly to refine our Foundations of English course into one that will enable our students' success in their core curriculum Composition courses. He was so concerned about lack of student success in our Foundations of Mathematics courses that he enrolled in the course this semester in order to better understand the work students were required to do and thereby help them move forward. He has, additionally, originated and overseen our Summer and Fall Institute programs, wherein a cohort of students who fall just below GSC admissions standards are given an opportunity to take their required remedial courses along with some degree-earning credits. Students who progress successfully

through two semesters are then enrolled as students in their chosen degree program. Dr. Raynie serves as academic advisor to all of these students, 30 per semester.

When I was asked to serve as Interim Dean of the newly-formed School of Arts & Sciences for the 2013-14 academic year, I had an easy decision regarding who I would ask to serve as interim department chair in my absence: Dr. Steve Raynie. He served that year with honor and consistency, earning the respect of his peers.

I hold Dr. Raynie in my highest regard; he has earned my deepest respect as a compassionate and dedicated steward of our students. I can think of no one more deserving of this honor than Dr. Steve Raynie.

Sincerely,



Edward J. Whitelock, Ph.D.
Department Head, Humanities
and Programs in Fine & Performing Arts



Gordon College
University System of Georgia

DIVISION OF HUMANITIES

419 College Drive
Barnesville, GA 30204
770. 358. 5047 fax 770. 358.5140
www.gdn.edu

November 27, 2016

Dear Selection Committee Members,

I write to recommend my colleague Stephen Raynie for the Felton Jenkins, Jr. Hall of Fame Teaching Award. Some of my comments stem from my work with him on our college's Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP); most, however, will stem from having Steve as a colleague and friend for over a decade.

As the Coordinator of the Gordon State College (GSC) QEP *First Things First: Increasing Mastery in Quantitative and Communication Skills*, I am deeply honored to say a word about Steve because he is the writer of the original proposal for our QEP. It was he who had the passion for our students that drove him to think long and hard for a topic that would reach every single student we have here at Gordon State. The proposal for *First Things First* points to a heart-breaking discrepancy that Steve noted between the GSC Vision Statement "where students flourish" and the reality that many of our students struggle with essential quantitative and written communication skills, leaving them underprepared for the intellectual rigor of an advanced education. Steve's proposal goes on to suggest that the University System of Georgia's Core Curriculum Area A courses are key places where interventions could have a dramatic effect because all of our GSC students must receive credit for courses in this unit and because the Area A courses are foundational to all other courses with a quantitative and/or written communication requirement. Steve argued passionately in the proposal, insisting that if the college is serious about being an institution "where students flourish," then the college must re-examine and refine the way essential skills are taught and reinforced. The *First Things First* proposal is truly about student learning—student learning that is fundamental to every course in a student's career.

As the person who chaired the QEP Research and Development Committee and then stepped into the role of QEP Coordinator, I can say with confidence that the college is deeply appreciative to Steve for the passion that led to such an impacting QEP topic. Steve himself would have been the first choice to be the Coordinator, of course. Any look at his Vitae will explain why he declined that role; yet, he did agree to sit on the original QEP Steering Committee as we worked our way from the research and topic phase all the way to our on-site reaccreditation visit. He also chaired the Communication Research Subcommittee and will now sit on the *First Things First* Steering Committee for the next five years. His work in all phases has been extraordinary. He cares deeply for the success of all of our students, and that has shown from the creation of the original proposal to his current work with the *First Things First* Steering Committee. Steve is always one of the first to offer assistance to me and to others involved in the project, he is always one of the first to offer insights that deepen our work, and he is always one of the first to research solutions to problems that arise as we begin implementation of our plan.

That type of dedication prompts me to turn now to speak about Steve Raynie, my friend and long-time colleague. It is speaking from this vantage point that is the most humbling, in all honesty. Steve's passion and drive have often left me speechless. I can think of no one on this campus who comes close to having the commitment level that he has. There are those who are driven to chair this committee or that initiative, but the drive is for personal advancement; Steve's zeal is for others, for our students and their learning and for our instructors and their well-being.

I have been honored to work with him for over a decade: to watch him argue for a policy change to help students, to watch him leave campus for area high schools in an effort to assist students bridge the high school to college gap, to watch him walk across the campus to attend a learning support class as a student so that he can better understand the struggles of a significant portion of our student body. I cannot fail to point out that in the midst of all that he does and represents, in the craziness of the demands of his responsibilities, I have never once seen him fail to notice people. He is not a distant lobbyist arguing a cause that sounds good but a sympathetic colleague, determined to help the situation of both students and instructors. Simply put, Stephen Raynie stands alone.

Thank you so much for your time. If I may be of further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me. My office phone number is (678) 359-5095 and my email address is a_higgins@gordonstate.edu.

Sincerely,



Dr. Anna Dunlap Higgins-Harrell

Professor of English and QEP Coordinator