**James 'Jeb' Byers, Ph.D.**

Josiah Meigs Distinguished Professor

Odum School of Ecology

University of Georgia

**Nomination Portfolio for the University System of Georgia**

**2019 Regents' Felton Jenkins, Jr. Hall of Fame Faculty Awards**

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA
Office of the Provost

**Sr. Vice President for**
**Academic Affairs & Provost**
Administration Building, 203
220 S. Jackson St.
Athens, Georgia 30602
TEL 706-542-5803
provost.uga.edu

November 27, 2018

USG Regents' Felton Jenkins, Jr. Hall of Fame Faculty Award Committee
270 Washington Street
SW Atlanta, GA 30334

Dear Members of the Felton Jenkins, Jr. Hall of Fame Faculty Award Committee,

It is with great pleasure that I write this letter of support on behalf of Dr. James 'Jeb' Byers for the USG Regents' Felton Jenkins, Jr. Hall of Fame Faculty Award. Dr. Byers is an innovative and inspirational educator whose instructional expertise is evidenced by his multiple teaching awards, invited pedagogical presentations, and students' enthusiastic praise. As a truly engaged professor, Dr. Byers has enhanced undergraduate learning at the University of Georgia and is, therefore, highly deserving of the Felton Jenkins, Jr. Hall of Fame Faculty Award.

Dr. Byers has taught various Ecology courses since 2002, from high-enrollment introductory classes to smaller seminars focused on fieldwork. His teaching philosophy is one of immersion and engagement. He asks his students to role play—imagine themselves as barnacles or larvae, for example—to encourage meaningful and thoughtful interactions with the content. Dr. Byers' effective instructional strategies have earned him excellent student evaluations and inspired numerous students to become STEM teachers and researchers. Students have described Dr. Byers as "energized" with a "passion [that] was infectious." As a winner of the Outstanding Teacher Award at multiple institutions, Dr. Byer's teaching merit has not gone unnoticed. Dr. Byers also has received the Richard B. Russell Award for Excellence in Undergraduate Teaching and the Josiah Meigs Distinguished Teaching Professorship, which is the University of Georgia's highest teaching honor.

Dr. Byers' commitment to the academic achievements of his students extends beyond the classroom. He is an engaged and passionate mentor who has led many undergraduates to careers as leading STEM researchers. Dr. Byers also has encouraged many of his undergraduates to publish their work in highly regarded scientific journals; one student was awarded the Ecological Society of America's Outstanding Undergraduate Student Research Award in 2008. Dr. Byers also devotes his summers to work with students from across the country, many of whom are from underrepresented backgrounds, to research infectious disease biology. Dr. Byers' positive support for his undergraduate students inside and outside of the classroom earned him the CURO Undergraduate Research Mentoring Award in 2015.

Dr. Byers is not only committed to the success of his own students, but to sharing his pedagogical advancements with the higher education community. His excellence in teaching and learning is widely recognized, resulting in nearly two hundred invited presentations around the world. Locally, he is a frequent participant in programs of the Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL) at UGA. During the 2014-2015 academic year, Dr. Byers co-facilitated a CTL Faculty Learning Community titled, "Nexus Classroom: Where Teaching and Research Coalesce." The same year,

the CTL selected Dr. Byers as a Teacher of the Week, recognizing him as making a difference in his students' lives. In 2015, Dr. Byers participated in the UGA Future Leaders series, in which he led a faculty support workshop detailing effective methods of feedback. The following year, he was inducted into the UGA Teaching Academy. It is no surprise, then, that Dr. Byers presented at the UGA New Faculty Orientation on "Best Teaching Practices" from 2016 to 2018.

Dr. Byers enthusiastically leads dynamic classrooms, cultivating critical STEM thinkers and advancing the overall quality of teaching and learning in higher education. He is remarkable educator who is highly deserving of the Felton Jenkins, Jr. Hall of Fame Faculty Award.

Sincerely,

Libby V. Morris
Interim Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost

2 October 2018

Dear Felton Jenkins Jr. Hall of Fame Selection Committee:

It is an honor to nominate Dr. James (Jeb) Byers for the Felton Jenkins Jr. Hall of Fame Faculty Award. Jeb is among the finest teachers at the University of Georgia and indeed one of the best in the nation. As Dean of the Odum School I have had the privilege to work with Jeb for the past eleven years. Jeb is a remarkably talented ecologist: creative, extremely dedicated, extraordinary student mentor at multiple undergraduate and graduate levels, a synthetic thinker, and passionate about communicating ecological ideas. Jeb thinks deeply about problems and is always open to new ideas and novel approaches. After joining our faculty he made an immediate impact on our undergraduate curriculum by revitalizing our core course offerings and initiating several new courses (*e.g.*, Ecosystems of the World), which now have large waiting lists due to his stellar reputation.

When Jeb applied for a faculty position in the Odum School, one of the qualities that greatly attracted us to him was the **Outstanding Teaching Award** he had received from the University of New Hampshire. Jeb earned this award out of 150 (mostly senior level) faculty in the College of Life Science & Agriculture, remarkably after only 6 years into his career as a professor. Such recognition immediately signaled to us an excellence in teaching and mentoring, a criterion high on our list for hiring. Many of Jeb's student evaluations rate him THE BEST instructor of their college careers. Student evaluations clearly and consistently reveal how meaningful Jeb's instruction and mentoring have been to his students. It should come as no surprise that only three years into his appointment at UGA **Jeb won the Odum School Outstanding Teacher Award**. One year later he won **the 2012 UGA Richard B. Russell Award for Excellence in Undergraduate Teaching**. Two years later he won the inaugural **First Year Odyssey Teaching Award**. And, in 2015, he won the **CURO Undergraduate Research Mentoring Award**, and was a **Finalist for the Graduate School Outstanding Mentoring Award**. In 2016 he was inducted into the **UGA Teaching Academy**. Finally, in 2017 he was awarded the highest teaching honor at UGA, **the Meigs Distinguished Teaching Professorship**. Needless to say, receiving this kind of sustained, extraordinary recognition is an impressive accomplishment and testifies to Jeb's extraordinary teaching and mentoring skills. The Felton Jenkins Jr. Hall of Fame Faculty Award would be a fitting capstone award for a professor with Jeb's abilities.

The courses Jeb teaches, their large enrollment, and the quality he brings to them clearly distinguish his teaching contributions as being at the highest level. His contribution to our core course Ecology 3500 is noteworthy because it is demanding, is a required course for life science majors, and has high enrollment. Jeb relishes his involvement with this course and turning students on to the material, while generating an impressive 500 contact hours per year for our unit. Jeb's passion for being in the classroom is evident; even though he is eligible for teaching relief due to the sizable administrative roles he has filled as our Graduate Coordinator, and now as Associate Dean, he chooses to fulfill his full teaching duty. He teaches across a variety of levels—(graduate, undergraduate, Honors) and class sizes (from 15 to 125). Notably, he also has led an award-winning First Year Odyssey Seminar every year since that program began in 2011.

As Dean of the Odum School of Ecology and member of many university promotion and tenure and other academic award committees, I review dozens of teaching evaluations each year. It is almost unheard of for a teacher to receive a near perfect rating in every class they teach, but

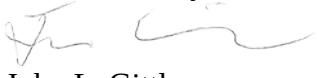
Jeb has achieved this every year. His average numerical evaluation score over 18 years is 4.78 (out of 5), and the lowest score he has ever received was a 4.22 (which dates back to 2002 during his first year of teaching). His evaluations reflect that he is well prepared and organized, readily accessible, responsive to student needs, and great at creating a challenging atmosphere that gets students to think deeply. Importantly, Jeb does not seek gratuitous approval from students by offering easy grades, but rather he sets extremely high performance expectations. A quote from former student John Meyer, currently Associate Director of Science Communications at the College of the Environment at the University of Washington, sums it up well: "*Dr. Byers was hands down a favorite professor among students. And this was not because his subject matter was easy – rather, it was often more challenging with the bar set high. But Dr. Byers connects well with his students through engaging lectures and labs that highlight his enthusiasm for the subject at hand, and reflect real-world scenarios and approaches that I still use today*."

Jeb's success at recognizing the interests and nurturing the careers of undergraduates extends beyond the classroom to also include mentoring of students in research. He has engaged more than 65 undergraduates in directed research over the past 18 years. Perhaps more revealing is the track record of the undergrads who researched with him over these years: 17 Undergraduate Honor's Theses, 15 students enrolled in top graduate programs (Duke, Stanford, Oxford, UGA); 1 Fulbright fellow; and 1 Peace Corp volunteer. Most impressively, Jeb has mentored 20 of these students to publish their work in top scientific journals, including one with his undergrad as first author in the high profile journal *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* that won the Ecology Society of America's Outstanding Undergraduate Student Research Award in 2008. Jeb continues his mentoring of students through CURO and a UGA-based REU on the population biology of infectious diseases that is funding 60 undergraduates, mostly from under-represented groups, in summer research over six years.

Jeb's commitment to instructional excellence extends to graduate education. He has taught many graduate level courses and mentored highly successful graduate students in Ecology over the past two decades. He is a senior affiliate and co-author of the successful new NSF Graduate Research Training Grant for Infectious Disease Ecology Across Scales (IDEAS) that just began in fall 2016 and will fund 25 PhD students in interdisciplinary disease work over the next 5 years. Jeb also filled a very important role for us as Graduate Coordinator in Ecology for seven years. His longevity in this role is attributable to the positon being well-matched with his passion for graduate education. He took his role to new heights showing tremendous vision for our educational mission by aligning our graduate curriculum, revamping our admissions process, and introducing a new graduate seminar course in cross-disciplinary ecology.

In essence, Jeb Byers has a gift to engage and stimulate students, a deep command of his ecological and scientific expertise, vibrant enthusiasm, and total commitment to ensuring that every student within his reach is challenged and learns to the fullest of his/her abilities. Most impressive is that Jeb has maintained his consistent standard of excellence every year over the past 18 years. As Dean of the Odum School and with a 36 year career perspective, I view Jeb as one of the best faculty I have ever encountered. I recommend him most enthusiastically for the Felton Jenkins Jr. Hall of Fame Faculty Award.

Yours sincerely,



John L. Gittleman
Dean and UGA Foundation Professor in Ecology

UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA

November 20, 2018

Felton Jenkins, Jr. Hall of Fame Faculty Awards
Board of Regents, Office of Academic Affairs
University System of Georgia

Dear Sirs and Madams:

It is an honor and a privilege to nominate Dr. Jeb Byers, Josiah Meigs Distinguished Teaching Professor of Ecology, for a *Felton Jenkins, Jr. Hall of Fame Faculty Award*. I was Felton Jenkin's Foundation Fellow undergraduate advisor while he was here at UGA. I cannot think of a worthier candidate for this honor than Dr. Byers.

I make this assertion because Jeb elicits the kind of student responses that are hallmarks of the finest teachers. You hear it in their excited conversations coming out of his classes, you see their looks of appreciation and veneration during conversations outside of class. And you hear it in student comments as they try to find a faculty advisor whom they trust will lead them towards their futures beyond academia. No matter how much faculty would like this kind of adoration and attention, this kind of respect is never conferred based on title or longevity, it is only earned by successful, public, and reliable mentoring. The best faculty do this transparently, daily, and in every interaction they have with students. Jeb is one of these teachers.

Every lecture Jeb gives is a study in critical thinking. He does this by using the most up-to-date experimental evidence in his field to teach core concepts. He reimagines classroom instruction by inviting students (even in large lecture halls) to participate in the logic train-of-thought that allows them to reach conclusions and make informed predictions about future results. This is the essence of science. A significant number of the students in his introductory ecology course (*e.g.,* up to 40%) are premed. One student told me, "Medicine is evidence-based inquiry. I am taking this class because that's the way Dr. Byers thinks. It's the way he teaches."

Jeb is also the most successful teacher I have ever seen in getting undergraduates to produce publishable research. It's high quality; it appears in the best journals; and there is an awful lot of it. His office door is always open and his laboratory is always welcoming for students who would like to roll up their sleeves and participate in scientific discovery. People from Jeb's lab do both field and laboratory experiments both here in Athens and on Georgia's coast. The excitement engendered by working with him in both of these settings powers his students forward to the best graduate programs in the U.S.

Jeb is unusual in that he works his magic at both the undergraduate and graduate level. In a life-time of academia, I don't think I have ever seen this before. He is essentially an ambidextrous star pitcher. It's real; it's important. It has the marvelous effect of blurring the distinction between these two normally discrete phases of teaching. It allows our undergraduates to see themselves as professionals. When they see themselves as professionals, they actually become professionals. Jeb's mentoring and teaching causes our students to realize their potential, and thereby fulfill the promise of this institution and its highest goals.
I was delighted to hear about the creation of the Felton Jenkins, Jr. Hall of Fame Faculty Awards; and I am equally pleased to recommend Dr. Byers for it.

Sincerely,

James W. Porter

James W. Porter
Meigs Distinguished Teaching Professor of Ecology

27 November 2018

The University of Georgia

Odum School of Ecology

Dear Members of the Selection Committee,

As the undergraduate academic advisor for the Odum School of Ecology, I have had the privilege to work with Dr. Jeb Byers for the past twelve years. Dr. Byers is a steadfast and valued resource to our undergraduate program and to me in my efforts to provide comprehensive and effective guidance to our undergraduates.

When Dr. Byers joined our faculty he immediately impacted the undergraduate curriculum; two examples of his positive impact stand out. First, Dr. Byers initiated a new Honors course (ECOL 3880H, Ecosystems of the World). Each time he teaches this course, several students become involved in research projects in laboratories across campus. He achieves this by inspiring his students and helping them to make connections with faculty of similar interests. Second, during the initiation of the First Year Odyssey Program in 2011, Dr. Byers saw a clear need to create a course designed to get freshmen involved in research beginning with their first semester on campus. He has taught his Odyssey course every year since and gets rave reviews from the students. The students learn scientific skills and interview faculty members about research. Many of them secure research positions by the end of the semester.

A hallmark of Dr. Byers's style is that he pushes and guides students from their earliest stages through to their development as independent thinkers and scientists. As a classic example, freshman Zachary Holmes came to me struggling to find his way at this large university. I suggested he take Dr. Byers's Ecosystems of the World class. Zack got hooked. Before I knew it, he was working in Dr. Byers's lab, developing independent projects, and traveling to distant field sites. Ultimately, Zack worked in the Byers lab for all four of his years at UGA, culminating in a full semester of research in Tasmania on a project that Dr. Byers spearheaded with two Australian colleagues. In large part due to his education in Dr. Byers's classroom and the research training he received in the Byers lab, Zack landed a prestigious internship upon graduation with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. He is currently a PhD student in in Molecular Genetics and Microbiology at Duke University.

Dr. Byers has a thriving summer program on the Georgia coast where he has up to 10 students at a time performing research at all levels, from early career students to students conducting research for CURO Honors theses. I talk with most of these students when they return from the summer, and even though they have been working 60-hour weeks in the heat, mud, and bugs, they could not be more excited with the learning experience they have just had.

Students recognize and appreciate the effort, commitment, and push for excellence that Dr. Byers inspires. The USG Regents' Felton Jenkins, Jr. Hall of Fame Award is truly a fitting award for all of his consistent hard work and success.

Sincerely,

Misha Boyd
Undergraduate Advisor in Ecology
Recipient 2012 UGA Outstanding Undergraduate Academic Advisor Award

140 E. Green Street • Athens, Georgia 30602-2202 • Telephone 706-542-2968 • Fax 706-542-4819

**JAMES E. BYERS**

CURRICULUM VITAE

Odum School of Ecology

## EDUCATION

B.S. Zoology (Honors and Departmental Distinction), Duke University; Durham, NC, 1992.
Ph.D. Ecology, University of California, Santa Barbara; 1994-1999.
Postdoctoral Fellow, University of Washington, Friday Harbor Marine Lab, 2000-2001.

## HONORS

**Fellow, Ecological Society of America (ESA)**, 2018
**Josiah Meigs Distinguished Teaching Professorship**, University of Georgia, 2017.
Fulbright Fellow, Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile, 2017.
**Outstanding Teacher Award**, Odum School of Ecology, University of Georgia, 2017.
**Inductee, UGA Teaching Academy**, 2016.
**CURO Undergraduate Research Mentoring Award**, University of Georgia, 2015.
Finalist for Graduate School Outstanding Mentoring Award, University of Georgia**,** 2015.
**Outstanding Teaching Award, First-Year Odyssey Seminar Program**, Univ. of Georgia, 2014.
**Richard B. Russell Award for Excellence in Undergraduate Teaching**, Univ. of Georgia, 2012
**Outstanding Teacher Award,** Odum School of Ecology, UGA, 2011
**Outstanding Teacher Award**, Univ. of N. Hampshire, College Life Science & Agriculture, 2007
Finalist, University-wide Outstanding Assistant Professor, University of New Hampshire**,** 2006.
Class of 1937 Professorship in Marine Biology, University of New Hampshire, 2006-2008.
National Science Foundation Graduate Fellowship
University of California, Santa Barbara General Affiliates Graduate Dissertation Award, 1999.
Ellen S. Burley Award for Outstanding Graduate Research Achievement, UC Santa Barbara, 1999

## ACADEMIC POSITIONS

*Josiah Meigs Distinguished Professor,* University of Georgia, 2017-present.
*Associate Dean for Admin and Research*, Odum School of Ecology, Univ. of Georgia, 2016-present
*Professor*, Odum School of Ecology; University of Georgia, 2013-present.
*Graduate Program Coordinator*, Odum School of Ecology; University of Georgia, 2009-2016.
*Associate Professor* of Ecology, Odum School of Ecology; University of Georgia, 2008-2013.
*Visiting Senior Fellow*, Dept. of Biological Sciences; Univ. of Wollongong, Australia, 2007-08
*Associate Professor* of Ecology, Dept. Zoology; University of New Hampshire, 2006-2008.
*Assistant Professor* of Ecology, Dept. Zoology; University of New Hampshire, 2001-2006.
*Postdoctoral Fellow*, Friday Harbor Marine Laboratories, University of Washington, 2000-2001.

## SELECTED PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

81 *Invited lectures* at Universities and Special Symposia since 1999, including 3 Keynote Addresses at International Conferences.
109 *Presentations* at national and international scientific meetings since 1999.

*Invited Participant,* UGA Future Leaders series, Academic leadership develop. program, 2015.
*Review Panelist,* NSF Biological Oceanography, 2012.
*Invited Scientific Member,* Working group to synthesize the effects of climate change on marine bioinvasions. Sydney Institute of Marine Science, Australia, 2012.
*Scientific Member,* Nat'l Academy of Sciences Team to assess ballast water discharge, 2010-11.
*Editor*, **Ecology Letters** (2009-present) and **Biological Invasions** (2009-2014).
*Advisor, Research Experience for Undergraduates*, Shoals Marine Laboratory, 2002-09. Worked alongside undergrads to conduct marine ecology research. Six of these projects were developed into Senior Honors Theses and published in the scientific literature.

## TEACHING EXPERIENCE

### *Traditional Undergraduate Courses*

Ecology, 11 semesters, 2002-present.
Ecosystems of the World (Honors), taught 5 semesters, 2011-present.
Marine Biology, 3 semesters. Designed and led 2 lab sections/week, 2001-05.
Marine Ecology, 3 semesters. I designed and led intense field-based course, 2002-06.
Senior Seminar in Ecology, 2 semesters. Capstone course for Ecology majors, 2009, 2018.

### *Courses of a Special Nature*

First Year Odyssey Seminar. Ecology of Invasive Species. Course to jump-start freshmen into research, 8 semesters, 2011-present.
Ecological Responses to Closed Fishing Zones, student-led research on marine reserves, 2003.

### *Graduate Courses*

Community Ecology, in Chile (in Spanish). Intensive week-long field course, summer 2017
Population & Community Ecology, Seminar, 14 semesters, 2002-present
Cross-Disciplinary Ecology, 10 semesters, 2010-present.
Conservation Ecology, 1 semester. Intensive field course using quantitative analyses, 2000.
Theoretical Ecology, Seminar, 1 semester, 2002.
Ecosystem Based Management, 2 semesters. Led students in data mining, analysis and publishing scientific paper, 2004-05.

### *Pedagogical Workshops and Other Teaching Experience*

*Invited Speaker*, Best Teaching Practices. UGA New Fac. Orientation, fall 2016, 2017, 2018.
*Invited Lecturer*, Feedback Exercises for a Dynamic Classroom. UGA Center for Teaching and Learning Speaker Series, spring 2015.
*Co-facilitator,* UGA Fac. Learning Community, The Nexus of Teaching and Research, 2014-15
*Teaching Assistant*, Methods in Aquatic Ecology; Univ. of Calif., Santa Barbara, 1996-98.
*High School Teacher*, English & Agriculture. G. Gérman High School, Ecuador, 1992-3

### *Advising*

Currently: 7 Ph.D. and 1 MS student, 1 undergraduate Honors Thesis, 5 Undergraduates.
Completed students: 11 Ph.D., 2 MS, 5 Postdocs, 17 Undergraduate Honor's Theses.

**SELECTED PUBLICATIONS (out of 114 total) (***undergraduate students; † graduate students)

●Engaged 20 undergraduates and 29 graduate students as co-authors on high-profile, peer-reviewed publications since 2005.

Haram†, L.E., K.A. Kinney*, E.E. Sotka & J.E. Byers. 2018. Mixed effects of an introduced ecosystem engineer on the foraging behavior and habitat selection of predators. **Ecology**. doi.org/10.1002/ecy.2495

Gehman†, A. M., R. J. Hall, & J. E. Byers. 2018. Host and parasite thermal ecology jointly determine the effect of climate warming on epidemic dynamics. **Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences** 115(4): 744-749.

Keogh†, C. L., O. Miura, T. Nishimura, & J. E. Byers. 2017. The double edge to parasite escape: invasive host is less infected but more infectable. **Ecology** 98(9): 2241-2247.

Byers, J. E., Z. C. Holmes*****, & A. M. H. Blakeslee. 2016. Consistency of trematode infection prevalence in host populations across large spatial and temporal scales. **Ecology** 97:1643-49

Keogh†, C. L., M. E. Sanderson*****, & J. E. Byers. 2016. Local adaptation to parasite selective pressure: comparing three congeneric co-occurring hosts. **Oecologia** 180(1): 137-147.

Byers, J.E., A.J. Malek*, L.E. Quevillon*, I. Altman† & C.L. Keogh†. 2015. Opposing selective pressures decouple pattern and process of parasitic infection over small spatial scale. **Oikos** 124:1511-19

Altman†, I. and J. E. Byers. 2014. Large scale spatial variation in parasite communities influenced by anthropogenic factors. **Ecology** 95(7): 1876-1887.

Blakeslee†, AH, CL Keogh*****, JE Byers, AM Kuris, KD Lafferty & M.E. Torchin. 2009. Differential escape from parasites by two competing introduced crabs. **Marine Ecol Prog Ser** 393:83-96.

Wood, C.L.*, J.E. Byers, K. Cottingham, I. Altman†, M. Donahue & A. Blakeslee†. 2007. Parasites alter community structure. **Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences** 104: 9335-39

Freeman†, A. and J.E. Byers. 2006. Divergent induced responses to an invasive predator in marine mussel populations. **Science** 313 (5788): 831-833.

**GRANTS WITHIN LAST 5 YEARS**

- ●16 grants: NSF (7); NOAA (6); GA Dept Natural Recourses (2); Australian Research Council (1)
- ●Totaling $2.37 million in funding
- ●These funds supported 16 graduate students and 24 undergraduates in research

**Active Participant in two Large-Scale Student Training Grants** (# of undergrad* and graduate† students supported)

**NSF, NRT-DESE (Graduate Training Grant) (25†)** Infectious Disease Ecology Across Scales. (Senior Personnel/Steering Committee/Graduate Mentor). 2016-2021. $2,900,000.

**NSF, REU site (60*)**, Population biology of infectious diseases. (Senior Personnel/Undergraduate Research Mentor). 2013-18. $283,500.

## Teaching Philosophy

My teaching philosophy integrates three principles that I think are the lifeblood of effective instruction: 1) excellent organization and command of material, 2) enthusiasm, and 3) an immersive engagement with the material. The latter point is particularly important—it is insufficient to talk about a subject; rather, students must experience it. Through in-class role playing activities, field trips, labs, and research projects, I ensure my students encounter the course content first-hand. This full-circle approach to instruction excites students about learning by bringing the material to life.

I have found that the best way to get students to internalize and truly understand the material is to have them experience it and apply it in a personal way. One hallmark of my instruction is that throughout each course I design and implement dynamic activities to boost students' interaction with the material. These in-class problem solving activities are a highly rated component of my classes. As one example, in Marine Biology I break off an interactive lecture on larvae and put students into small groups to role play. I tell them that they are pregnant barnacles and I depict hypothetical details of their surrounding coastal environment. They must then use principles that we just discussed to develop simple rules of thumb for how they should provision and release their larvae to maximize survival. For example, given the environmental context, students must consider what strategies best help their larvae to avoid predators, prevent sinking, and use the currents favorably. While doing so, they must also recall and integrate what they have learned in previous sessions that also applies to this role-playing activity. After 10 minutes we reconvene, and I call on group members to share parts of their strategy with the class; collectively we piece together an optimal strategy. By getting the students to coalesce the information we have covered and apply it in a fun, interactive way, this exercise helps them retain the material incredibly well.

It is especially important to bring active student engagement to areas of critical need. Upon my arrival at UGA, I asked to teach Ecology (ECOL 3500), which is a highly subscribed course for Life Science majors. I wanted to engage the students rigorously with the material in this core course. In this course, students participate in peer and problem-based learning from the first day of class. The peer groups prepare students for the collaborative nature of science as they provide and receive peer feedback on their reasoning, and the case and problem-based scenarios (whether based on real/current events or imagined) provide students with supported practice in thinking like a scientist. I also developed a course for the Honors Program —Ecosystems of the World (ECOL 3880H). There I challenge some of the brightest students at the University to think critically about how the world fits together. Finally, I have been teaching a First Year Odyssey Seminar course on The Ecology of Invasive Species every year since the Odyssey program began in 2011 as part of UGA's Quality Enhancement Plan. The central goal of the Odyssey program is to acquaint students with the teaching, service, and research missions of the university in their first semester. In this first-year course, students explore interesting examples of invasive species and are exposed to current research in this area, from my own lab and others'. Through field trips, faculty interviews, and student-led discussions, I get them firsthand exposure to invasive species research. My work on this course was honored with the inaugural First Year Odyssey Teaching Award in 2014.

Faithful to my immersive philosophy, another area I promote is student research. I have engaged more than 65 undergraduate students in independent research over the past 18 years, many of whom have gone on to careers in teaching and research. I mentored students through an NSF-sponsored Research Experience for Undergraduates (REU) program at the Isles of Shoals

Marine Lab for 8 years, and a UGA REU program on the ecology of infectious disease for the past four. I also actively mentor for a new NSF Graduate Training grant that will collectively fund 25 PhD students over the next 5 years in interdisciplinary research in disease ecology.

Finally, I contribute to campus-wide efforts to help improve instructional practices. I have been invited to share my best teaching practices with my peers—in the 2015 CTL Faculty Speaker Series, and as a panelist and speaker at the 2016, 2017 and 2018 New Faculty Orientations. In 2014-15 I co-facilitated a Faculty Learning Community (FLC) on the Nexus of Teaching and Research that focused on experiential learning. We developed ideas and a website that we shared with upper administration just as they were beginning to adopt experiential education as an essential component of undergraduate education at UGA, and upon which several components of the university-wide experiential learning requirement were based.

Full immersion and engagement empower students. It also invigorates me and continues to intensify my passion for teaching.

**Experiential education through role-playing in the sciences**

On the first day of class in Ecology before I have even uttered one word about a syllabus or a definition, I tell them "I am glad you are here. Our class has been awarded a $2 million grant from the government to determine once and for all whether Big Foot is real." I project a picture of a fuzzy, possible Big Foot-looking image taken from the Internet (Fig. 1). I tell them to turn to their neighbors and introduce themselves, and then in groups of four they determine how they are going to use this money over the next year to solve this issue. At the end of several minutes, I ask the groups to share ideas, which we write on the board and discuss together as a class. Consistently, a clear consensus emerges as to the best steps to take. I then make several important, big reveals to them—1) they just proved to me (and themselves) that they all have an innate ecologist within themselves because virtually every suggestion that comes forth is deeply rooted in ecological science and 2) that although this exercise was a bit far-fetched, in principle it is exactly the essence of what ecology strives to do: determine the abundance and distribution of species.


Fig 1. The first thing my students see during our first class of Ecology 3500.

One of the great secondary benefits of this exercise is that the students have actively run the very first exercise of the class. This makes very clear by example that the tone and spirit of my class will be very different from other science classes; it will be one of active engagement and participation. They will not simply be listening to me. Rather, the students learn that being present in class and engaging their brains is the essential ingredient to excel in my class.

Immersing students in peer-facilitated problem-based learning is, in my experience, the most effective strategy to promote durable knowledge and students' understanding of theoretical scientific concepts. Role-playing, as a highly effective practice in my classes, has become a feature that the students love. The role-playing scenarios becomes more sophisticated and


Fig 2. The Ideal Free Distribution reinforced with the Chipmunk Game Show. Would you choose the habitat behind the Door lettered A, B, or C? Does your choice also depend on the choices others are making, and thus how crowded the habitats are becoming?

targeted as the subject matter deepens. Another of my favorites relates to a lesson on the ideal free distribution (IFD), a key ecological theory regarding how an organism chooses in which habitat to reside. I spend 10-15 minutes describing the theory and math behind IFD, but then I tell the students that the whole idea is already inherently engrained in them as humans, and that tapping into that inherent gut instinct will help them truly understand IFD. This begins the Chipmunk Game Show. On the stage I physically designate 3 habitats of decreasing quality: A, B, and C (Fig. 2). I walk around the room with mic in hand and call on chipmunk volunteers (these are not always the students who raise their hands). I ask them which habitat they are going to choose to live in. The rest of the chipmunk audience tells us if they agree with the choice. At first, the choice is easy, since A is clearly the best option. But after a few chipmunks, the best habitat A is getting crowded. Eventually a chipmunk will decide that being the first and only chipmunk in habitat B is better than being the $n^{th}$ chipmunk in a crowded A habitat. Subsequently, habitat B gains chipmunks until it too becomes crowded, and eventually a chipmunk picks the poor quality, but empty of chipmunks, habitat C. The students get it instantly. I can see and hear the "Aha" moments that confirm their grasp. It is a quick and lighthearted game, but it solidifies their knowledge by bringing the concept to life.

Role-playing also appears in my assessment measures. For instance, in my Ecosystems of the World course, I ask:

> (10pts) You are going to show off to your friends how easily you can float on surface of water in a pool. What are things you can do (to you or the water) apart from spending direct energy to make your floatation easiest? You have a month to prepare. Use the sinking rate (SR) equation to describe and relate to the mathematics of why the various things you do help with your floating. Discuss at least 3 different strategies.

Involving the students into the exam question not only aligns with our class activities but also creates a meaningful assessment measure in which students are open to apply their personal strategies.

On the surface, the sciences do not seem a likely place to find avenues for this approach, but I have found ample ways to paint scenarios to draw them in—e.g., in the roles of explorers, animals, or NASA scientists. Students do some of these role-plays individually and some in small teams, but one key aspect is to come back together at the end and share optimal approaches to the problems. This processing phase is interactive and benefits from crowdsourcing. Collectively, we arrive at the best answers, providing the added benefit of demonstrating to students the benefit of collaboration among diverse team members, each with a distinct perspective and experience to bring to the table.

EMORY UNIVERSITY
Emory College of Arts and Sciences
Department of Environmental Sciences

Dear Felton Jenkins, Jr. Hall of Fame Faculty Awards Selection Committee,

It is with utmost enthusiasm that I write in support of Jeb Byers' nomination for a Felton Jenkins, Jr. Hall of Fame Faculty Award. I have had the great pleasure of working with Jeb for the past 11 years – first as an undergraduate researcher, then as a PhD student in his lab, then as a faculty colleague in the Odum School of Ecology before I moved to my current institution – and I have benefitted at each step of my career from Jeb's exceptional talents as a teacher. I vividly remember my first interaction with Jeb when I was an undergraduate at the Shoals Marine Lab deciding on a summer research project. Jeb led a group of students on an exploration of the island's rocky shoreline, explaining different aspects of the ecology of the system—some that were well understood and others virtually unknown. As he painted a picture not only of the known ecology of the system, but of the knowledge gaps waiting to be filled, and the types of experiments that one might use to tackle them, I found my brain generating a list of questions and envisioning experiments - even though I had not previously conducted ecological research and had only just been introduced to the system. I was hooked. This empowerment of students to envision themselves as participants in scientific research invigorates curiosity, transforms students' understanding of the scientific process, and sometimes even leads students to seek out careers in science themselves. Indeed, Jeb's field lecture that afternoon was so captivating that I study the same ecosystem today!

As a Lecturer teaching large lecture classes for the first time, I am working to model my teaching approach after Jeb's. In the introductory Ecology course I'm teaching this semester, my most successful teaching moment so far was the direct result of seeking and following Jeb's advice. The concept – using matrix algebra to simplify population growth projections - was one that students notoriously find intimidating. Jeb uses a clever approach to the topic, and boosts student confidence in mathematical reasoning along the way. He first guides student through conceptually building the different components of the population growth model, without explicitly introducing the actual mathematical framework. Students explore the concepts in small groups while Jeb tours the room checking in and guiding their efforts, so that the groups figure out how to calculate population size one generation into the future by hand. Only after the students have successfully come up with the conceptual solution to his question does he reveal to the students that the calculation could be vastly simplified by putting it into the mathematical structure of matrix algebra. Instead of balking at the math, the students can easily appreciate and incorporate the matrix approach to solve the problem of projecting population size in the future. Not only does this exercise teach students an important concept in population ecology through an engaging peer-learning approach, but it also empowers students to overcome their fear of math by showing them that the kind of conceptualization they achieve in the first part of the task means they've actually already developed the mathematical framework themselves!

As a new faculty member at Emory, I am continually grateful to Jeb for the training and encouragement he provided during my PhD that enabled me to successfully pursue my career goals. As a new teacher, I am grateful to have Jeb as a role model challenging me to inspire, stimulate and empower students as I attempt to follow in his footsteps as a teacher of ecology.

Sincerely,

Carolyn Keogh, PhD
Department of Environmental Sciences
400 Dowman Drive
Math and Science Center, 5th floor, Suite E520
Atlanta, Georgia 30322
Tel 404.727.4216
Fax 404.727.4448
envs.emory.edu

To the Felton Jenkins, Jr. Hall of Fame Award Selection Committee,

As a former student of Dr. Jeb Byers it is my pleasure to write to you in support of his nomination for the 2019 Felton Jenkins, Jr. Hall of Fame Award. I have known Dr. Byers as a teacher and as a research mentor for over seven years now and have continued a professional relationship with him since my graduation in August, 2014. My relationship with Dr. Byers has been transformative from the beginning, and if it were not for his prowess as a teacher and his enthusiasm for learning, I am confident that I would not be where I am today. His insatiable appetite for a holistic understanding of complex systems was infectious and provided me, and all of his students, a framework to assess disparate facts and theories. This integrated approach to teaching augmented my comprehension of ecology and instilled in me a desire to continuously seek new information and a better understanding of all subjects.

Dr. Byers' effectiveness as a teacher is in large part due to his vast amount of personal experience as an ecological researcher. He paired almost every lecture with pictures and tales from conducting his own research in the field. These tools kept students engaged and truly interested in the subject matter, waiting for the conclusion of the lecture as one would wait for the end of a story. Dr. Byers artfully used engaging material to maintain his classroom as a perpetually intriguing and stimulating environment. As a student in his classroom, I saw firsthand the effectiveness of this strategy. Dr. Byers' students came to class eager and excited to learn and left the class motivated to broaden their understanding of ecology.

My experience in Dr. Byers class during my freshman year prompted me to volunteer to work in his marine ecology laboratory the following summer. Working one-on-one with Dr. Byers in his lab and out in the field made it clear that his eagerness to teach extended out of the classroom and into every aspect of his professional life. I felt so energized and empowered by his guidance that I applied for additional funding through the NSF REU program to continue my work the next summer. Over the next three years, he pushed me to learn every step of the research pipeline, from experimental design to presentation and publication. The pinnacle of my undergraduate education was spending my final semester in Tasmania, Australia, leading two international collaborations between Dr. Byers and his colleagues. This achievement was made possible by the continuous support and guidance that I received from Dr. Byers.

The way that I think about my own research and the critical eye through which I view peer research have been shaped by the rigorous but encouraging scientific environment created by Dr. Byers, both in his classroom and in his lab. Not only has Dr. Byers left a lasting influence on my professional and academic self, but he has become a friend and mentor that I hope to have the privilege of working with for years to come. He has instilled in me what I'm sure will be a lifelong eagerness to learn and pursue new information. Since graduating and leaving the Byers lab I have matriculated into the Molecular Genetics and Microbiology PhD program at the Duke University Medical School. Dr. Byers has fully prepared me for the next stage of my training and I am well on my way to establishing a career as a researcher. Despite shifting academic fields, I continue to collaborate with Dr. Byers on analysis and publications.

Thank you,

Zachary Holmes, PhD Candidate
Molecular Genetics and Microbiology Duke University Medical School

Regents' Felton Jenkins, Jr. Hall of Fame Award Selection Committee,

During my 4 undergraduate years at the University of Georgia I sat in many classrooms and listened to many different professors lecture on various subjects. Some professors were good, others were memorably bad, and others left no lasting impression. Dr. Byers stands out from the rest of the group as a professor who was undeniably great. Not only was his presence in the classroom a step above the rest, demanding respect and attention with his knowledge and likeability, but he displayed a genuine interest in my success outside of the classroom by routinely providing me with career advice.

My first experience with Dr. Byers was as a student in his ECOL 3500 course. I had taken a similar AP course in high school, and I expected to have little enthusiasm about attending the large lecture hall where this class was held. Dr. Byers changed my attitude in the first meeting, and apparently had a similar effect on the rest of the class, as nearly every seat in the auditorium was consistently filled (a rarity in these large lecture courses). The content of the course, while familiar to me already, was presented in new and exciting ways, and I was provided opportunities to apply myself beyond the basic requirements of the course. His expectations of students were high, but he made himself available to provide any resources or office hours that were necessary to help us meet his expectations. Overall, it was the most enjoyable "auditorium class" that I took at the University of Georgia.

My second experience with Dr. Byers came the following semester when he was assigned to be my faculty mentor. This gave me an opportunity to interact with him on a more personal level outside of the classroom. My opinion of him only grew as I learned that he was always willing to meet with me to discuss my courses, my career plans, research opportunities, and offer any other advices. It was obvious that he viewed his role in the Odum School of Ecology as more than just a lecturer and a researcher; he wanted his students to succeed and to help inspire and prepare the next generation of ecologists.

It was during an advising session that Dr. Byers made me aware of the platform for our third significant interaction: an honors course he was teaching, ECOL 3880H. This was another very positive experience, as the small class size made discussions more prominent than they had been in the lecture course. Dr. Byers had a talent for initiating these discussions, and I always looked forward to attending class. Moreover, it was obvious that he had put much more time into preparing the course than I had grown to expect from university professors. Not only was the content organized very effectively as a whole, but each lecture had a great balance of necessary background material, points for built for group discussion, and demonstration of concepts with video. Without a doubt, his portion of this class (it was jointly instructed) is my favorite ever taken, even to date.

I graduated from the University of Georgia in 2012, but, in great part due to the advising of Dr. Byers, I still found myself immersed in marine ecology. In December of 2017, I graduated from the PhD program at the University of Miami's Rosenstiel School of Marine and Atmospheric Science. I obtained a dual PhD in the divisions of Applied Marine Physics and Marine Ecology, and my interdisciplinary thesis was focused on the olfactory capabilities of marine fish larvae and the implications for open ocean navigation. I have been involved in writing successful multi-million-dollar NSF proposals, leading extended field campaigns in remote locations, developing novel methods for studying fish behavior, and bringing

sophisticated models of search behavior from the field of physics to the field of biology.

Dr. Byers is a great role model for aspiring scientists. In my years at UGA he inspired my own personal interest in aquatic systems, prepared me for a career in science, and provided hours of informative and entertaining lecture. He is a fantastic candidate for the Regents' Felton Jenkins, Jr. Hall of Fame Award, and I genuinely hope that he is selected.

Sincerely,
Matthew Foretich

Dear Members of the Regents' Felton Jenkins, Jr. Selection Committee,

I provide my highest recommendation for your consideration of Dr. Jeb Byers for the Regents' Felton Jenkins, Jr. Hall of Fame Award. Dr. Byers has demonstrated unparalleled efforts to engage and stimulate students through his enthusiasm, experience, and in-depth knowledge that makes him an effective instructor in a large group and small classroom setting.

I have had the pleasure of having Dr. Byers as an instructor for two courses. I met Dr. Byers in my first college class on the first day of the semester as a freshman Ecology major. I was impressed by his enthusiasm, warmth, and engaging personality. He was very effective in quickly breaking the ice and establishing relationships with each of the 15 participants in his Freshmen Odyssey Seminar (FYOS) on invasive species of Georgia. During the course, Dr. Byers not only facilitated weekly lively discussions of current ecological events, but also steered development of my approach to scientific inquiry and analysis. Most notably, he assigned each student to connect with another professor to learn more about their research. This invigorated us to start thinking about getting involved with research, bridging the gap that often exists between students and professors. As a result, I gained confidence and was able to interact more readily with other professors, enhancing my academic experience and opening the door for several unique research opportunities.

Dr. Byers was also my instructor for a large, upper level ecology course (ECOL 3500). He was highly prepared and dedicated in a way I had not seen before in a professor. For example, on the first day of the course, Dr. Byers involved multiple students in a classroom participation exercise, soliciting volunteers and selecting others to engage that personalized the demonstration. This energy translated into a rich learning experience that effectively conveyed the principles of population distributions in relation to habitat quality and resource availability. His enthusiasm and dedication to the subject matter and our personal development as students was evident throughout the course. Dr. Byers was always available for student consultations. He made the effort to personally congratulate me at the end of the course for my success in the class and for having the second highest score in the class.

Dr. Byers expanded his role as a teacher when he offered me an opportunity to assist on a summer research project in coastal ecology. This was my first real experience in field research, literally “getting my feet wet” collecting oyster larvae in order to assess their patterns of fecundity. As a result, I had a once-in-a-lifetime experience, developed a supportive network of colleagues, sharpened my understanding of field work, and learned a lot about my scientific capabilities. Furthermore, Dr. Byers helped expand this unique opportunity for me by assisting with the development and completion of my CURO Summer Research project and Honors thesis, which we are currently working to get published. Working with Dr. Byers through the publication process has enhanced my academic experience as a graduate student.

Based on my experiences and discussions with other students in Dr. Byers’ classes, I feel that he is an outstanding candidate and more than worthy of this award. Dr. Byers exemplifies the best qualities in a college professor. Based on his remarkably engaging and excellent skills as a teacher and mentor, I wholeheartedly recommend him for this award.

Most Sincerely,
Clarissa Keisling, Class of 2018

**Achievements and Accolades in Student Learning**

**Undergraduate**

Awarded UGA Undergraduate Research Mentoring Award in 2015

- Engaged more than 5 dozen undergraduate students in independent research, many of whom have gone on to careers in teaching and research.
- Supervised 17 Undergraduate Honors theses.
- Involved 20 undergraduates as co-authors on high-profile, peer-reviewed publications.
- Supported 11 undergraduate students to present at national scientific meetings.
- Mentored 1 to 3 undergrads each summer for 8 years in marine ecology research in NSF-sponsored Research Experience for Undergraduates (REU) Program at the Isles of Shoals Marine Lab.
- Served as mentor for the UGA-based, NSF-funded REU program: "Population Biology of Infectious Diseases" sponsoring 45 undergrads over six summers in cutting-edge research.
- Engaged 8 undergrads in international research in Australia (3), Panama (2), Canada (2), and Puerto Rico (1).

Emphasized grant-supported student research

- Supported 24 undergrads in research of a semester or longer using 6 grants from NSF, 5 NOAA grants, 1 Australian Research Council grant, and 1 GA Dept. of Natural Resources grant.

Awarded the inaugural First-Year Odyssey Teaching Award in 2014

- Created a Freshman Odyssey Course focused on research
- In this course, students build confidence and understanding of the UGA research culture through faculty interviews, dialogue with grad and undergrad researchers, student-led discussions of scientific literature, and formal presentations.

Created an Honors Course—Ecosystems of the World (Ecol 3880H)

- Intense, interactive class, that is consistently one of the highest rated in Ecology.

Promoted visibility of student research through multi-media exposure

- UGA Research Magazine. Spring 2013. A Question of Latitude: Oyster Reefs Differ Up and Down the Southeast Coast. Featuring research by his CURO student Zack Holmes and graduate student Jenna Malek.
- Georgia Public Broadcasting aired a 30-minute presentation (*Fiddling with Crabs*, 2012) on **Georgia Outdoors** featuring work from Byers' lab, including footage on the projects by 4 students: Zack Holmes, Mariana Rivera, Rachel Smith, and Jenna Malek. (http://www.gpb.org/georgia-outdoors/season-19/episode/fiddling-with-crabs).

**Graduate Students**

Graduate Program Coordinator in the Odum School of Ecology, 2009-2016

- As Grad Coordinator, Ecology received 14 NSF predoctoral Fellowships (This is 36% of all NSF fellows at UGA over this period, the highest percentage by any unit.)

Created a school-wide seminar in cross-disciplinary ecology (ECOL 8030)

- This course became part of the Ecology core curriculum and enhances intellectual interaction among our students and the academic culture of the Odum School.

Core member of recently-awarded NSF Graduate Research Traineeship (NRT) program ("The Ecology of Infectious Disease Across Scales").

- First NSF training grant at UGA: Will fund 25 PhD students in a high profile interdisciplinary program over 5 years.

Finalist for the Graduate School Outstanding Mentoring Award 2015

- Advised 13 (past) graduate students (11 PhD, 2 MS) and 8 current students (7 PhD, 1 MS).
- Served on 24 Graduate Student Committees (14 PhD, 10 MS).
- Helped students attain high profile job placements: All of Byers' students have landed competitive jobs in top positions upon graduation. (e.g. Univ. of South Carolina, Univ. of Washington, Univ. of British Columbia, Boston Univ., Colby College, NOAA, Army Corp of Engineers).

**Created a culture of excellence within his lab where students are mentored to compete for prestigious fellowships and awards:**

Student Fellowships:

- 4 NSF Pre-doc fellowships (the highest number per faculty member in our unit)
- 1 Sloan Foundation Fellowship
- 3 NOAA Fisheries Fellowships
- 4 NOAA National Estuarine Research Reserve Fellows
- 2 NSF East Asia and Pacific Summer Institutes Fellowships
- 1 American Museum of Natural History Fellowship
- 3 Dissertation Completion Awards
- 2 UGA GSA Graduate School Fellows
- 1 UGA Wormsloe Fellow

Student Awards:

- Ecology Soc. of Amer. Frost Award for Excellence in Graduate Research (A. Gehman, 2018)
- Three Minute Thesis Winner (V. Schutte, 2012)
- Excellence in Teaching, UGA Grad School (V. Schutte, 2013)
- Outstanding TA Awards (V. Schutte, W. McDowell)
- NOAA Knauss Marine Policy Fellowships (J. Meyer, J. Lee, J. Malek)
- Ecological Soc. of Amer. Outstanding Student Research Award 2008 (Wood, Blakeslee, Altman)

Other Achievements

- Published 50 collaborative papers with graduate students, including 33 with grad student as lead author, 1 in Science, 4 in Proceedings of the Nat'l Academy of Sciences, and 1 which won the Ecological of Society of America Outstanding Student Research Award.

- Collaborated with student co-authors on 10 major grants totaling $529,000 from the National Science Foundation, NOAA, EPA, and the GA Department of Natural Resources.
- Collaborated on more than 4 dozen presentations with graduate students at national and international scientific conferences.

**Summary of Numerical Student Undergraduate Course Evaluations**

Values reported are means of Overall Rating of Instructor on standardized course evaluation surveys. Scoring scale ranges from 5 (Excellent) to 1 (Poor).

| Course | Date | Enrollment | Overall Rating of Instructor |
|---|---|---|---|
| Marine Biology | 2001, Fall | 37 | 4.83 |
| Ecology | 2002, Spring | 54 | 4.22 |
| Marine Ecology | 2002, Fall | 22 | 4.73 |
| Ecology | 2003, Spring | 63 | 4.63 |
| Marine Biology | 2003, Fall | 28 | 4.78 |
| Ecology | 2004, Spring | 65 | 4.46 |
| Marine Ecology | 2004, Fall | 19 | 4.71 |
| Ecology | 2005, Spring | 56 | 4.50 |
| Marine Biology | 2005, Fall | 29 | 4.93 |
| Ecology | 2006, Spring | 44 | 4.87 |
| Marine Ecology | 2006, Fall | 18 | 4.88 |
| Ecology | 2007, Spring | 68 | 4.68 |
| Senior Seminar | 2009, Spring | 7 | 5.00 |
| Ecology | 2010, Spring | 87 | 4.82 |
| Ecosystems of World (H) | 2011, Spring | 20 | 4.86 |
| Odyssey Seminar-FYOS | 2011, Fall | 15 | 4.93 |
| Ecology | 2012, Spring | 85 | 4.57 |
| Odyssey Seminar-FYOS | 2012, Fall | 15 | 4.92 |
| Ecosystems of World (H) | 2013, Spring | 16 | 4.82 |
| Odyssey Seminar-FYOS | 2013, Fall | 16 | 4.88 |
| Ecology | 2014, Spring | 125 | 4.63 |
| Odyssey Seminar-FYOS | 2014, Fall | 15 | 5.0 |
| Ecosystems of World (H) | 2015, Spring | 11 | 4.78 |
| Odyssey Seminar-FYOS | 2015, Fall | 15 | 4.93 |
| Ecology | 2016, Spring | 106 | 4.55 |
| Odyssey Seminar-FYOS | 2016, Fall | 14 | 5.0 |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Ecosystems of World (H) | 2017, Spring | 20 | 4.91 |
| Odyssey Seminar-FYOS | 2017, Fall | 15 | 5.0 |
| Ecology | 2018, Spring | 80 | 4.64 |
| Senior Seminar | 2018, Fall | 21 | 4.89 |
| Odyssey Seminar-FYOS | 2018, Fall | 14 | 5.0 |
| | | **Total: 1200** | **Average: 4.79** |

**Sample Narrative Course Evaluations (2001-2018)**

**Ecology**:

- Byers has by far been the best professor I have had in my three years at UGA so far. He explained the material very well and in an interesting way. I truly felt as though he wanted all of us to succeed
- Awesome professor. Explains everything well and is easy to learn from. One of the best professors I've had here at UGA. Dr. Byers really cares about his students
- Dr. Byers was probably the best teacher I have had at UGA. He is very engaging, makes students excited about the material, and brings an energy to the lecture room that a lot of teachers don't have.
- Dr. Byers is an amazing teacher. Really makes class interesting
- Dr. Byers did an excellent job of organizing the class & stimulating my interest. He was one of the best professors I have had the honor of learning from at the University of Georgia.
- Jeb was an outstanding instructor. He was always clear, organized, and very enthusiastic and energetic. He created a great learning atmosphere.
- Dr. Byers is one of the best teachers I have had a UGA. I didn't think I would be interested in Ecology but he presented the materiel in a very interesting way. I rarely missed a class. I like how he is very receptive to his students and willing to help at all times.
- Jeb is an amazing teacher, who really has a passion for this subject. He tries to keep the matter interesting and does a very good job doing that. I honestly can't think of how to improve this course
- I would recommend this course, especially the instructor. One of my favorite teachers I've had. He shows lots of enthusiasm and obviously loves his work. He encourages class discussion and participation. GREAT instructor.
- I would definitely recommend this course to other students. I don't see a single way in which the course could be improved at this time.
- Dr. Byers does a very good job of explaining difficult/complicated material. He is enthusiastic about it, which helps to keep students interested. Both are qualities that help make Dr. Byers an excellent professor.
- Dr. Byers was a fantastic professor one of my favorites in college!
- Being taught by Jeb Byers was by far my favorite thing about this course. His enthusiasm is second to none.

- Jeb is one of the best professors I've ever had at UGA and I am so fortunate that I had the opportunity to take his course as an elective for Public Health. He makes learning what it should be.
- The first half of this course was incredible. Dr. Byers is one of the best professors I've ever had. He was engaging and dynamic and made coming to class interesting. The exams and grading were fair and he stimulated interest for me outside of class.
- As a graduating senior, I have to say that he is one of the best professors that I have had at UGA. I feel that in a lot of my science courses, professors do not take the time to engage the class and make sure that we are understanding the content before moving on.

**Ecosystems of the World (Honors):**

- Jeb was honestly one of the best professors I have ever had. He was engaging, passionate, and extremely knowledgeable about the subject matter. The scenarios in class where we had to think like an organism were fun and very helpful in the learning process.
- This was the best class I have had yet at UGA. I truly looked forward to going to class.
- Dr. Byers is one of the best teachers I have had at UGA. He made everything interesting, and tested fairly on a full understanding of broad concepts.
- I just love the subject and what we learned. Dr. Byers is a great teacher and makes us want to learn.
- I think the course was really well done and one of the best I've taken in my four years at UGA. I can't think of any improvements. There is no substitute for a knowledgeable and enthusiastic professor.
- I liked that Jeb kept us interested in the course material with his enthusiasm about the subject matter. The best part was when he incorporated his own experiences and videos into the lecture, it made a real world connection to what we are learning that few classes can really do
- This is the 2nd time that I have taken a class by Dr. Byers. He is my favorite teacher that I've had at UGA.
- Dr. Byers' passion was infectious!
- Dr. Byers enthusiasm about the material made it easy for me to get engaged in the course.

**Marine Biology:**

- If I had to pick my favorite course, this would be it. A large part of the reason for that is Jeb. He is an excellent professor. He has an excellent understanding of the material and he presented it clearly and effectively. He was more involved with the students than any other professor I've had and he was always more than willing to help out.
- Excellent professor—very enthusiastic and knowledgeable about subject matter! Very animated to keep class involved early in the morning. Extremely fair and cares about his students. Definitely one of the best professors I've had!
- Dr. Byers was an incredible professor. He was so enthusiastic about the material and presented it in an interesting way. He did an excellent job teaching this course. We covered a lot of material and I feel that my knowledge of marine biology has greatly expanded!
- I have had Jeb Byers as a professor twice and in my 4 years he has been one of the best if not the best. Dr. Byers made this class interesting and brought so much enthusiasm to each lecture. Dr. Byers was always available outside of class if students needed help.

- Jeb is awesome at teaching because he teaches us but doesn't look down on us. He teaches us by enthusiasm. During lab and lecture he was teaching us by showing us what he was talking about. Awesome Job Jeb!!
- Thanks for a great semester. I think you did a great job teaching this course. I also think your involvement in lab and your enthusiasm is something a lot of professors should look up to. In my four years here I think you may be the first science professor who is interested in getting to know the students. Great job!
- Dr. Byers is an excellent instructor. By far the best I've had