

1/30/15

Dear Award Committee Members,

I am writing this letter to express my wholehearted support for Professor Cheri Young, nominee for the University Distinguished Teaching Award. I have always believed that there are two kinds of professors – those who teach because it is their job and those who teach because it is their calling. It is very obvious that Cheri has found her calling. Cheri has an extraordinary talent and her passion for education, innovation, and the welfare of her students is a rare treasure. She is not just a professor. Cheri is a mentor, cheerleader, coach, friend, and leader. I can confidently say that the selection committee will be hard-pressed to find another candidate that rivals Cheri's drive, loving demeanor, experience, and contributions to the University of Denver and the Denver community.

Cheri has spearheaded the program at the Fritz Knoebel School of Hospitality Management that, mark my words, will put our school on the global map. Cheri has helped create a partnership with the African Community Center (ACC) of Denver, Colorado to help refugees build skills to sustain a successful career in hospitality. When I participated in this program, I was partnered with a refugee from Burundi. Working with my "protégé" Jeanine, and being her new "DU Friend" was one of the greatest highlights of my college career. Because of this program, our school is not only helping create jobs but we are helping refugees in their integration to American society. I invite you all to read the Chancellor's Statement on Diversity, Equity and Inclusive Excellence. When you read it, you will be reminded of Cheri. Cheri's work has a direct correlation with the University's mission. Her work is the collaboration and innovation that DU speaks of. Cheri helped me realize through her course that happiness is not a result of what we get, but rather what we give.

I am a good student but Cheri made me want to be a better student. Cheri challenged me every class period. Before I met Cheri, I lacked professional writing skills. Every week she would give me an endless list of tips that would help improve my writing. She was so patient with me and it was obvious how invested she was in my academic success. There was one week during the quarter that was extremely difficult for me. I was stressed with the amount of schoolwork I had to complete, including a large paper for her class, and had voiced my concern about not being able to find an internship for the summer. Cheri saw that I was in a rough place. I remember she walked over to me and asked to speak to me in private. We walked to the corner of the room and she gave me a hug and said she was going to extend my paper deadline by two days. Cheri can read her students. She can see when we are upset and just want to give up but she doesn't let us do that. She knows that being a student isn't easy. She saw how hard I was working to improve my writing skills and did not want my stress to destroy the progress I had already made. That was one of the nicest gestures I have ever received from a professor. Cheri doesn't want her students to just be "good", she motivates us to constantly show her how we can be "better".

Once you meet Cheri, it quickly becomes evident that your relationship with her will not end in the classroom. Cheri is as helpful outside of the classroom as she is from within. Whenever I need career advice, I know I can turn to Cheri. I no longer have any more classes with Cheri, but every time I see her, she asks for an update on Emily. What am I doing? What do I want to do? How can she help me get to where I want to go? It's never about her – it is always about her students. I will never be able to thank her for what she has done for me and for my career. Cheri is not the kind of person that expects a thank you but that is why it is my deepest wish that you will honor her with this award. It is not possible for her to understand the extent of which she has helped me, let alone every student she comes in contact with. I cannot think of another individual that is more deserving of this respected accolade.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Emily Proctor". The ink is dark and the signature is fluid, with a large loop on the "P" and a trailing flourish.

Emily Proctor
Class of 2015