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CASE

1307 New York Avenue, NW, Suite 1000
Washington, DC 2005-4701

Dear U.S. Professors of the Year Program Selection Committee:

I am writing to you to express my wholehearted support for Dr. John Zubizarreta, nominee for the 2010 CASE Professor of the Year. I am a 2008 graduate of the Honors Program at Columbia College and am an Auditor for Bank of America's Corporate Audit department.

From my first introduction to the man many fondly refer to as "Dr. Z", I felt his enthusiasm and determination toward learning and teaching. During my time at Columbia College, I collaborated with Dr. Zubizarreta on presentations for the Popular Culture Convention and presented at three Southern Regional Honors Council Conferences and three National Honors Conferences. He encourages participation in professional settings for students to continuously experience collaborative learning experiences with a wider audience. As a testament to his dedication to such professional conferences, Dr. Zubizarreta's undergraduate students presented to the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) for the past five consecutive years in an atmosphere where the presence of undergraduate students is extremely rare. For the 2010 conference, Columbia College Honors students were expressly invited by the AAC&U to essentially be reporters, blogging and podcasting sessions to the larger higher education community.

Very few activities take place on the Columbia College campus without Dr. Zubizarreta stopping by in support. Observing an Honors Program Director's involvement in so many activities on campus and in the National and Regional Honors Councils encourages his students to mimic the behavior. I was heavily engaged with the Honors Executive Council, the Business, Economics and Accounting Club, the music department, the tennis team, and recruiting future students with the Office of Admissions, all of which greatly enhanced my college experience.

Where Dr. Zubizarreta makes the most profound impact as a medium for learning is his interaction and dedication to students. As a mentor, he worked tirelessly for nearly ten months to enable me to fulfill my desire to study abroad at an Honors Semester in Swansea, Wales. Working in collaboration with two other institutions of higher learning, Dr. Zubizarreta facilitated the writing of articulation agreements to enable my full-tuition scholarship to transfer from Columbia College and pay for the program costs in Wales; other accords were signed to coordinate

the return of my class grades from Wales to Columbia College. Thanks to his dedication to my goal, the program in Wales continues to be an attractive option for each young Columbia College woman wanting to broaden her horizons and see other parts of the world.

Without a doubt, being educated in a liberal arts setting and climbing the corporate ladder are two vastly different environments. Liberal arts teaching encourages studying a wide range of disciplines in small settings, teaching students to think critically, write well, and speak clearly. Dr. Zubizarreta's classes were by far the most interesting of my undergraduate career as a significant portion of learning experiences in the Honors curriculum involves myriad disciplines –visual or performing arts, technology, and even the sciences. His teaching style is interactive, multi-disciplinary, challenging, and fun. Discussion within an online forum allowed the class to continue well after students left the physical classrooms. Reflective learning was also encouraged as a way to retain and expand upon classroom learning, culminating in end-of-semester reflective journals. The journals became a way to review the assignments completed during the semester, find new links between materials and expand upon the greater themes from the semester. To this day, they rest on my bookshelf.

In the corporate world, formal meetings have replaced class debates under magnolia trees and focused auditing activities exist in place of papers and projects. However, having Dr. Zubizarreta act as a driving force toward the positive outcome of my undergraduate experience most certainly prepared me to face the challenges of the 'real world.' The collaborative nature of conference presentations prepared me for both the individual and group roles necessary to be a member of an effective audit team and critical thinking and debate skills honed in class allowed me to immediately establish myself as someone who isn't afraid to ask challenging questions or take the fire that sometimes comes along with making risk-based judgments. As a mentor, Dr. Zubizarreta assisted me in improving and capitalizing on essential skills and I attribute much of my professional success to his tutelage.

Two years after graduation, Dr. Zubizarreta and I are still in frequent contact. He continues to be a positive, impactful influence on my choices to be ambitious with my goals (completing my Six Sigma Black Belt in process improvement by June 2010 and beginning a PMBA program this fall), to be a mentor to others, and to appreciate the places from which I came. I continue to be involved with Columbia College fundraising, Honors activities, and alumnae events. My ongoing philanthropic giving to Columbia College is due in no small part to my faith in Dr. Z's abilities to transform the lives of students, faculty, and other alumnae alike. I strongly urge you to consider Dr. John Zubizarreta for the CASE Professor of the year. His impact on my life and the lives of students at Columbia College for over twenty years is profound and I can think of no other individual more qualified or deserving of this respected accolade.

Sincerely,
Chelsea E. Lee
Columbia College
Class of 2008