

Dr. Michael Greenberg
Distinguished Professor and Associate Dean of the Faculty
Bloustein School of Planning and Public Policy
33 Livingston Ave., Room 536
New Brunswick, NJ 08901

February 14, 2017

Dear Dr. Michael Greenberg,

It is with great enthusiasm that I am writing this letter of endorsement in support of Dr. Debra Borie-Holtz. I had the privilege of working as Dr. Borie-Holtz's Teaching Assistant in her undergraduate Research Methods course (hybrid and online) during my first year in the classroom (Fall 2012 - Spring 2013). Throughout that year and afterwards, I benefited immeasurably from her example as an instructor, as well as from her support of my own pursuits in the classroom and in my doctoral career. Dr. Borie-Holtz is an advocate for her students, as well as for her Teaching Assistants. I am sure that many others are able to speak to Dr. Borie-Holtz's skill in teaching her students about "measurement error," "threats to validity" and so on; however, it is her ability to empower students and mentees that I hope to emulate in my own career and that I feel is essential to the Bloustein community.

I could say so much about Dr. Borie-Holtz's strengths as a professor after working with her for a full year; however, I will focus here on her commitment to her students' successes, as well as on her ability to deliver course content in a vast range of modes and assessments to accommodate learning styles. First, Dr. Borie-Holtz has so much warmth for her students, demonstrated in her enthusiasm for their work, as well as her commitment to helping them see it through to the other side of a challenging concept or assignment. In preparation for the final assessment for her Research Methods course, she would work around the clock (really) to support students grappling with challenging new statistical concepts. At the end of this process, students emerged with so much pride in what they had produced. Second, she made the same material available in several formats so that students could listen to, read, or visualize weekly lessons. Assessments, too, came in the form of quizzes, as well as long and short writing assignments, encouraging students to keep on top of a substantial amount of content while also ensuring that they digested key concepts. In these ways and others, Dr. Borie-Holtz created a rich and positive learning environment that held the attention of students of diverse interests and backgrounds.

Dr. Borie-Holtz provided invaluable support and mentorship for me as I made my first foray into college-level teaching. She gradually loosened the reins on me over the course of the year so as to balance her students' learning needs with my goals as an aspiring instructor. For example, having gradually increased my involvement in individual lab lessons during the Fall semester, I was able to confidently serve as the lab instructor in the Spring. This kind of apprenticeship is hard to come by as a Teaching Assistant, because it requires a substantial time investment on

the part of faculty. To facilitate my learning, Dr. Borie-Holtz was readily available to answer questions, discuss the course content, and support me in supporting the students. The benefit for me was clear as I went on to confidently teach my own courses the following year; this was also in investment in her own teaching, as the quality of support I was able to provide for students enriched their experience of the course, as well.

Finally, Dr. Borie-Holtz has provided support and encouragement in navigating my own doctoral career, during and after my time as her Teaching Assistant. I owe to her the confidence I had to design and teach two new courses in the following year, both of which drew heavily on what I learned under her wing. As I returned to the fold this Fall after a year of maternity leave, she has helped me to think strategically about balancing my dissertation with teaching and other endeavors. This support has helped tether me to my work during a time when it is easy to wander off course.

In sum, Dr. Borie-Holtz has been a strong advocate and mentor for me, and for her undergraduate students. Thank you for this opportunity to write this endorsement on her behalf.

Sincerely,

Lee

Doctoral Candidate

Bloustein School of Planning and Public Policy