GOVERNOR’S AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE IN TEACHING

Nomination for: Ron Dotzel
Associate Professor of Mathematics
Department of Mathematics
and Computer Science
College of Arts and Sciences
329 ESH

Nominated by: Prabhakar Rao
Professor
Department of Mathematics
and Computer Science
College of Arts and Sciences
348 ESH

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March 25, 2015

Faculty Senate and University Assembly
Faculty Teaching and Service Awards Committee
University of Missouri-St. Louis

Dear Colleagues:

It is my pleasure to nominate Dr. Ron Dotzel for the Governor’s Award for Excellence in Teaching. Professor Dotzel has been a member of the Department of Mathematics and Computer Science since 1980, joining a department that had been in existence for just over 15 years. At the time, it was still a mathematics department, when computer science had barely begun to emerge as a discipline. Through this department passed students who would become mathematicians, high school math teachers and workers in the burgeoning field of information technology. Dr. Dotzel joined a group of faculty, some of whom are still revered as teachers who defined their students’ lives and careers. Ron Dotzel certainly belongs to this group.

Ron’s teaching philosophy over the decades has become quite simple. He states that in lower division classes, he works towards establishing fundamental competence. In upper division classes, he strives to challenge students. Mathematics at any level can only be learned through problem solving, and the role of a professor with a deep research program is to bring that vitality and enthusiasm to the classroom.

His philosophy has manifested itself in many ways, all of which have had a considerable impact on the department and its students.

Every fall for decades, Ron has conducted a preparatory workshop for students who wish to take the Putnam exam. The Putnam is the most prestigious competitive mathematical problem solving test in the US for college undergraduates. Raising their skill levels to take this test is a serious enterprise for students and Ron has been a genial guide for over thirty years.

For a number of years, he set up on our campus a venue for the American Mathematics Competition, a nation-wide mathematics problem solving contest for middle and high school students. He established a network of math teachers in local schools who would send their students to UMSL to take part in the contest.
He has organized his own math competition on campus, which he calls the Andalafte Competition (after another famous math faculty member), where prizes are awarded to the three best undergraduates in the competition.

On the campus, Ron has been the primary faculty advisor to the Math Club for many years. With his help, the club organizes talks, arranges campus events like celebration of Pi day, etc. I should mention that this March, at Pi day event, one of Ron’s current calculus students stood in the cafeteria and recited correctly the first 2000 digits of pi; I do not recall such an impressive feat from all prior years!

As perhaps the best calculus teacher in the department, Ron has long been recognized as a vital influence on freshmen, especially those headed towards the STEM disciplines, and he has been part of the Freshman Year Experience Committee for a long time.

With his research background in topology and geometry, Ron teaches courses to advanced undergraduates, MA students and PhD students. When it comes to sharing his expertise, he goes beyond normal expectations: for example, this winter semester, in addition to his regular teaching load that he is mandated to teach, he is teaching an additional 3 reading courses to groups of one to three students on Differential Geometry, on Group Representation Theory and also on Real Analysis. These are basically three expert tutoring sessions on topics, two at the graduate level and one at the senior level. One of these courses was set up by him just so that a student can graduate in time.

In addition to his expertise in pure mathematics, Ron has developed a parallel expertise in statistics. As far back as 1984, he was teaching statistics to undergraduates and getting the students to conduct surveys of their fellow UMSL students, then analyze the surveys using statistical methods to answer questions like “do students from blue-collar and white-collar backgrounds do equally well at UMSL.” These days, statistics is taught in many departments of college campuses; Ron’s practical approach to the subject created an applied statistics course that pre-dates many of the new courses.

As one of the department’s statistics and actuarial experts, Ron has served as an advisor to graduate and undergraduate students in other departments like biology and economics.

One of the consequences of his strength in statistics was that he became a proponent of starting an actuarial program at UMSL. For a long time, he had been informally tutoring UMSL students who wanted to pass the actuarial exams. Later, he wrote a proposal for establishing a BS in Actuarial Science. This proposal was scaled back by the campus, and a certificate in Actuarial Science is now being offered by the department. Naturally enough, Ron is the mainstay of this certificate program and he has been teaching the Financial Mathematics sequence of two courses for the last few years.
You will probably learn from other sources in this nomination package that his students describe Ron as an excellent teacher. As a colleague, he is responsible and dignified in every aspect of his work. I myself know from talking with students that he is kind to students, bending over backwards to help them succeed. According to students, he has the “best jokes in town” and they “learn stuff too”! Clearly, for many decades, Ron has made the students the focus of his career. Whether it be organizing them to puzzle over problems, engaging them with learning at advanced levels, or creating opportunities for them to study subjects that will lead them to a solid professional career, he has never stinted of his time and energy. His students will remember this.

Sincerely,

Prabhakar Rao
Professor
Curriculum Vitae

Experience:

Instructor (University of Texas-Austin) 1977-1980
Assistant Professor (U.M.-St. Louis) 1980-1986
Associate Professor (U.M.-St. Louis) 1986-present
Visiting Associate Professor (University of Göttingen, Germany) 1990-1991

Education:

B.A. (Trenton State College 1968)
M.A. (Pennsylvania State University 1969)
Ph. D. (Rutgers University 1977)

Publications:

10. $Z_p$ Actions on Spaces of Cohomology Type $(a,0)$ (joint with T. Singh), Proceedings of the AMS, 1991, 875-878.


**Invited Lectures:**

- Invited lecture at Mehta Research Institute, Allahabad, India, 1992
- Invited lecture at University of Delhi, India, 1991
- Invited lecture at University of Cosenza, Italy, 1991
- Invited lecture at University of Konstanz, Germany, 1991
- Invited lecture at Institute of Mathematics, Chinese Academy of Sciences, Beijing, China, 1996
- Invited lecture at Summer Research Conference on Transformation Groups, University of Colorado, 1983
- Invited lecture at the conference, Groups, Geometry and Topology in Malaga, Spain, 2006
- Invited Lecture at the 34th Symposium on Transformation Groups in Wakayama, Japan, November 2007

**Memberships:**

American Mathematical Society (AMS)  Mathematical Association of America (MAA)
List of Courses Taught (Fall 2004 to Fall 2014)

FALL 2014
MATH 4010 Financial Mathematics I
MATH 4670 Introduction to Non-Euclidean Geometry
MATH 5110 Differential Manifolds

SUMMER 2014
MATH 3000 Discrete Structures
MATH 4550 Combinatorics

SPRING 2014
MATH 1320 Applied Statistics I
MATH 4020 Financial Mathematics II
MATH 4800 Introduction to Topology

FALL 2013
MATH 1800 Analytic Geometry and Calculus I
MATH 4010 Financial Mathematics I

SUMMER 2013
MATH 3000 Discrete Structures
MATH 4350 Number Theory

SPRING 2013
MATH 2020 Introduction to Differential Equations
MATH 4020 Financial Mathematics II
MATH 5140 Set Theory and Metric Spaces

FALL 2012
MATH 1800 Analytic Geometry and Calculus I
MATH 4010 Financial Mathematics I

SUMMER 2012
MATH 3000 Discrete Structures
MATH 4550 Combinatorics

SPRING 2012
MATH 1900 Analytic Geometry and Calculus II
MATH 4400 Introduction to Abstract Algebra
FALL 2011
MATH 1320 Applied Statistics I
MATH 2000 Analytic Geometry and Calculus III
MATH 5100 Real Analysis II

SUMMER 2011
MATH 3000 Discrete Structures
MATH 4350 Number Theory

SPRING 2011
MATH 1900 Analytic Geometry and Calculus II

FALL 2010
MATH 1800 Analytic Geometry and Calculus I
MATH 4100 Real Analysis I
MATH 4200 Mathematical Statistics I

SUMMER 2010
MATH 3000 Discrete Structures
MATH 4550 Combinatorics

SPRING 2010
MATH 1320 Applied Statistics I
MATH 2000 Analytic Geometry and Calculus III

FALL 2009
MATH 1320 Applied Statistics I
MATH 1900 Analytic Geometry and Calculus II

SUMMER 2009
MATH 3000 Discrete Structures
MATH 4350 Number Theory

SPRING 2009
MATH 2000 Analytic Geometry and Calculus III
MATH 4100 Real Analysis I

FALL 2008
MATH 1900 Analytic Geometry and Calculus II
MATH 4400 Introduction to Abstract Algebra

SUMMER 2008
MATH 4550 Combinatorics
SPRING 2008
MATH 2000 Analytic Geometry and Calculus III
MATH 3000 Discrete Structures

FALL 2007
MATH 2000 Analytic Geometry and Calculus III
MATH 4800 Introduction to Topology

SUMMER 2007
MATH 3000 Discrete Structures
MATH 4350 Number Theory

SPRING 2007
MATH 1320 Applied Statistics I
MATH 1900 Analytic Geometry and Calculus II

FALL 2006
MATH 1320 Applied Statistics I
MATH 3000 Discrete Structures

SUMMER 2006
MATH 3000 Discrete Structures
MATH 4160 Complex Analysis I

SPRING 2006
MATH 1320 Applied Statistics I
MATH 1900 Analytic Geometry and Calculus II

FALL 2005
MATH 1320 Applied Statistics I
MATH 2000 Analytic Geometry and Calculus III

SUMMER 2005
MATH 3000 Discrete Structures
MATH 4100 Real Analysis I

SPRING 2005
MATH 1320 Applied Statistics I
MATH 1900 Analytic Geometry and Calculus II

FALL 2004
MATH 2000 Analytic Geometry and Calculus III
MATH 5420 Algebra
TEACHING PHILOSOPHY

I believe that my role as teacher is to create a stimulating and challenging environment in which students can realize their potential. In upper division classes I strive for clarity of presentation which is aimed to challenge students and whet their appetites for the next installment of the ongoing saga. In lower division classes I work towards establishing fundamental competence through examples. I believe that mathematics at any level can only be learned through problem solving and I also believe that my research background allows me to bring vitality and enthusiasm to the classroom. Consequently my attitude in class is that we explore questions, together. Whenever I get the chance, I will pose other questions related to the work at hand. This activity of wondering is more or less typical of the research frame of mind and I want students to know this.

I also want students to know or at least infer, from my remarks and demeanor that the study of mathematics is about a lot more than mathematics. It is about the general process of problem solving, in practically every context. I have said many times that once graduated from the university, over the course of a lifetime a person will most likely be working for a variety of employers. No matter the context, one central commonality is problem solving. Questions like “What do we want to find out?”, “What do we know, for certain?” are asked. Then the magical process of working out a solution comes next. The study of mathematics encourages this attitude and fortifies the individual with the patience and experience to work with the determination required. My role as a teacher is not just to deliver the day’s lesson. It is about a lot more. It is preparing my students to confidently and rationally approach problems and to feel that deep sense of pleasure in their solution.

As far as actual classroom practice is concerned, I like to impress upon my students the view that mathematics and mathematical thought is ubiquitous and ongoing. For example, in Financial Mathematics (Math 4010, 4020) we regularly consult financial publications such as the Wall Street Journal and Barron’s. Since, in these courses, we consider various investment situations involving mortgages, bonds, stock and options it is perfectly natural that we should consult those sources. Many of our students have the intention of entering the actuarial field. To do so requires the successful completion of a series of professional exams, over the course of several years. Our actuarial certificate program, of which the two financial mathematics courses mentioned form a part, prepares students for the first two of these exams. A number of our students have been successful in this. In fact, regularly, both Fall and Spring semesters we are fortunate to have UMSL graduates who are currently working in the field come to my classes and discuss their experiences in the actuarial and financial services industries. It is probably not necessary to say that these visits, now in their third year, make a noticeable impression upon the students. The effect is especially keen because they are UMSL alumni.
Another stimulating activity is a competition I have instituted among the students involving the virtual investment of $10,000 in margin accounts where they can go long or short on stocks or bonds. I am the broker and my terms are lenient, but realistic. This has proven to be an exciting exercise for them, adding a dimension of (virtual) risk and a dose of realism to their studies. This gives them a chance to apply some of the concepts and procedures we have discussed in class. I do stress the value of long term, prudent investment. This activity gives them a harmless introduction to the market on a daily basis.

In other courses I also try to bring in extra-curricular material relevant to the studies at hand such as film clips, photos and historical material. I once invited my combinatorics class to a viewing of an old Colombo rerun because it deliberately discussed an interesting counting and logic problem as part of the plot. On another occasion I brought in photos of the St. Louis arch when we were discussing the catenary curve in Calculus, so as to point out the fact that the arch is based on an inverted catenary. This made the study of an abstract curve much more interesting, personal and real. In teaching statistics, there are very many realistic examples which can be introduced. Extremely so. On one occasion I was teaching our Math 1320 and at one point we found ourselves discussing the Powerball lottery and some students expressed the belief that certain numbers seemed to be chosen with more frequency than fairness would dictate. Well, this gave us a perfect occasion to apply what we had been learning in class and it was finally agreed by all that based on the sample data we had gathered to address this question, there were no unusual frequencies. Needless to say these forays into the real world are invaluable experiences for the class and I have never yet found a sleeping student while on our adventures.
Instructor: Ronald Dotzel
Class: TuTh 5:30-7:45 Classroom: 317 CH
Office Hour: 4:00-5:00pm, 8:00-8:30pm TuTh or by Appt.
Office: 329 ESH Phone: (314) 516 – 6337
e-mail: dotzler@umsl.edu (preferred contact method)


Prerequisites: Math 1800 (Analytic Geometry and Calculus I) or approved equivalent with a grade of C- or better. If a record of your prerequisites is not in the UMSL computer system, you will be asked to provide verification by the end of the first week of the course.

Grading: Course grades will be based on the following:

Tests: Five (5) exams, worth 100 points each, will be given during class on the dates specified on the calendar. No exam will be dropped. A make-up test will be given only in the case of a verifiable emergency and only if you contact me prior to the test.

Standard scales apply (≥90% - A, ≥80% - B, ≥70% - C, ≥60% - D, <60% - F)

Five tests – 100 points each, 500 points total
Quizzes/Homework – 100 points each
Final exam (3 hours) – 300 points.
Total of 1000 points.

Quizzes/Homework:

Thirteen short unannounced quizzes will be given at various times. There is no make-up for quizzes. The lowest 3 scores will be dropped and the remaining scores will be averaged. Quizzes will usually consist of straightforward exercises similar to examples worked in class or suggested for homework. Extra time will not be given to students coming in late on quiz days or exam days.

Homework assignments will be posted each Thursday on MyGateway. Assignments will be due on the following Tuesday. Once an assignment is collected on Tuesday, solutions will be posted. Homework will definitely not be accepted after posting of the solutions on Tuesday. Each assignment is worth 10 points. Only problems with solutions fully worked out will be given partial/full credit. Answers with no work will not be given any points. The best 10 homework scores will be figured into your grade.

Final Exam: The mandatory Final Exam will be given on Tuesday, May 12 from 5:30 to 7:30pm in our classroom. The final will be comprehensive and worth 300 points.
**Practice Homework:** After each lecture, you should work the corresponding suggested problems and check your answers with the book to see if you need additional help. In general, you will need at least 2 hours of outside studying corresponding to each class meeting.

**Math/Writing Lab:** The [Math/writing Lab](#) in 222 SSB offers free tutoring during the day, evening, and weekends. For more information on availability, visit their website or Mygateway for hours.

**MyGateway:** MyGateway will be used for posting announcements, assignments, handouts, etc. Be sure to check this source as needed. If you are a new student at UMSL, take your ID to any computer lab, they will show you how to access MyGateway.

**Campus Testing Center:** 93 J.C. Penney Bldg  314-516-6396

Any changes to this syllabus will be announced in class.

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Now we are done I'm sure you agree
And so we summarise in words suitably
Of integrals and Taylor series we learned
And many a page has slowly been turned
Yet nevertheless there is much yet to see
In dimensions not one, not two but three
During each class, you need to silence your phones and put your phones away. No text messaging during class time.

Calculators are not allowed in this course.
MATH 4010 - FINANCIAL MATHEMATICS
FALL 2014

Instructor: Ronald Dotzel
Office: 329 ESH (phone: 314-516-6337)
e-mail: dotzelr@umsl.edu
Office hours: 1:00-3:30 T, Th or by apt.
Text: Mathematical Interest Theory by L. J. Vaaler & J. Daniel (MAA Publications)

Exams: Test 1 (Tuesday 9/17) Test 2 (Tuesday 10/15) Test 3 (Tuesday 11/19)
Exams count as 100 pts. each

Final Exam (Tuesday 12/10 2:45-4:45pm)
Final Exam counts as 100 pts.

Homework: Assignments will be given collected and graded (10 points each)
10 of these will count toward your grade for a total of 100 points.
Your course grade will be based on the maximum possible 500 points.

About the course:
The mathematics of finance touches almost everyone’s life at multiple points. Investments, loans, mortgages and the like all involve sometimes very intricate financial calculations. These calculations involve, in all cases, the compilations of interest.

We will study the many different ways in which these computations arise. The content of this course is essential in many different applications and anyone aspiring to be an actuary must master this material.

We will cover the first five chapters of the text and additional topics if time permits.

Chapter 1 Growth of Money (Basic Interest Theory)
Chapter 2 Equations of Value and Yield Rates
Chapter 3 Annuities Certain
Chapter 4 Annuities with different payment and Conversion Periods
Chapter 5 Loan Repayment

Noteworthy Dates:
9/2 Holiday
9/16 Last day to drop a course or withdraw from school without a grade.
11/11 Last day to drop a course. Instructor approval needed.
11/23-12/1 Fall Break/Thanksgiving
12/2 Classes resume
12/7 (Saturday) Classes End.
Final Exams the week of 12/9-12/13
Dr. Dotzel has taught a variety of undergraduate and graduate mathematics and statistics courses at UMSL in the last ten years. He has taught three courses at the freshman/sophomore level, three at the sophomore/junior level, nine at the senior level, and four at the graduate level. Courses taught at the undergraduate level include MATH 1320 (Applied Statistics I), MATH 1800 (Analytic Geometry and Calculus I), MATH 1900 (Analytic Geometry and Calculus II), MATH 2000 (Analytic Geometry and Calculus III), MATH 2020 (Introduction to Differential Equations), MATH 3000 (Discrete Structures), MATH 4010 (Financial Mathematics I, MATH 4020 (Financial Mathematics II), MATH 4100 (Real Analysis I), MATH 4160 (Complex Analysis I), MATH 4200 (Mathematical Statistics I), MATH 4350 (Number Theory), MATH 4400 (Introduction to Abstract Algebra), MATH 4550 (Combinatorics), MATH 4670 (Introduction to Non-Euclidean Geometry), and MATH 4800 (Introduction to Topology). At the graduate level, Dr. Dotzel has taught MATH 5100 (Real Analysis II), MATH 5110 (Differential Manifolds), MATH 5140 (Set Theory and Metric Spaces), and MATH 5420 (Algebra). In addition to his normal teaching load, Dr. Dotzel has done numerous reading courses (MATH 4500 and 5500) throughout the years at the undergraduate and graduate level.

**COURSE EVALUATION DATA**

Every semester, students in each course offered by the department fill out questionnaires evaluating the instruction in that course. This is done through the use of a standardized course evaluation form. The standardized scale used in the questionnaire is from 1 to 5, with 5 indicating the best performance. In the questionnaire, the two most important items are the communication skills of the instructor and the overall quality of instruction. In all the classes that Dr. Dotzel has taught at UMSL in the last ten years, his average communication score is 4.79, while his average quality of instruction score is 4.17. His averages at different course levels are summarized in the following table:

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The corresponding overall averages for in-rank faculty in the department over the past ten years are 4.18 for communications and 4.13 for instructional quality. As evident from above, Dr. Dotzel has consistently performed very well in terms of both measures at all levels.
STUDENT COMMENTS FROM COURSE EVALUATIONS

The Department surveys students in all courses to determine how well its faculty perform in the classroom. A section on the questionnaire asks the question, “What do you particularly like (if anything) about this course?” Below are some comments that students in Dr. Dotzel’s sections of MATH 1320, 1800, 1900, 2000, 3000, 4010, 4020, 4100, 4160, 4200, 4350, 4400, 4550, 4800, 5100, 5110, 5140 and 5420 have made over the last ten years starting from Fall 2004.

MATH 1320, Applied Statistics I

- I liked how slowly and yet efficiently Dr. Dotzel presented the course material. He was very thorough and gladly took any questions.
- The professor is very interactive, he teaches the class instead of lecturing. i.e. answering questions.
- Excellent teacher – returns assignments the next class session and has good humor. I like the pace of the course, easy to keep up and learn the material.
- I really enjoy Mr. Dotzel as a teacher, he is very thorough and answers any questions thoughtfully.
- The instructor gave good examples in course that related the technical material to real-life and understandable examples. Used humor, making the coursework not so dull and interesting.
- The class is well structured, there are few surprises. About the same work load every week. The jovial attitude of the instructor.
- Dr. Dotzel clearly likes the subject matter. His enthusiasm is evident in the lectures. I greatly enjoyed him as a professor.
- I think Prof. Dotzel prepared us well for the tests. This was a very fair class. I will look for Prof. Dotzel’s classes in the future.
**MATH 1800, Analytic Geometry and Calculus I**

- Dr. Dotzel is extremely passionate about the beauty of mathematics and makes every attempt possible to share this joy with his students.
- This course was well-structured, clearly organized and passionately taught. I really liked that there was a quiz and graded homework assignment every week--it helped to keep me focused and involved. Dr. Dotzel is well versed in calculus, but also that he enjoys the subject. I found his enthusiasm to be infectious, and I think the course material has changed the way I think.
- The instructor was one of the best I’ve had for math. He gave excellent in-depth explanations of the concepts. He was not afraid to try differing methods.
- The teacher teaches the math in a manner which is easy to learn. He stops during new material to explain why something is based on previous things we’ve learned so it’s a good review and helps me learn the new material more easily.

**MATH 1900, Analytic Geometry and Calculus II**

- Professor Dotzel does a really good job of explaining the concepts in the book. He does not move too fast and goes in depth to help understand the harder concepts/homework problems.
- I thought the expectation more clearly outlined and available to students (ie, in syllabus, MyGateway). I noticed that Dr. Dotzel, throughout the semester would demonstrate through examples the applications of calculus in a variety of other fields of study. He’s also a pretty funny guy, which makes class enjoyable.
- Very rigorous. Mr. Dotzel is very good at teaching.
- His obvious passion about the subject material with appropriate humor mixed in to make the often large amount of information easier to digest.
- The punctuality of online grade posting. His dry-sense of humor. Doesn’t teach from the book. Applies his expertise and teaches from his head.
- Test material very closely mimics suggested problems from homework and topics covered in class. Also occasional history tidbits are interesting.
MATH 2000, Analytic Geometry and Calculus III

- Expectations are clear and available. Dotzel remained on schedule per syllabus. Fair grader – lot of opportunities to make up points. Can tell Dotzel really enjoys teaching math.
- Dr. Dotzel was a great instructor. He welcomed any questions and was very thorough in his lecturing/teaching.
- This course is amazing. By now we’ve done enough Calculus that new ideas have a lot of context and make sense. Generating to 3 D really solidifies (haha) the basic ideas of differential and integration. Developing visualization skills especially for multiple integrals was very enjoyable and useful. Dotzel is excellent.
- I like that Dr. Dotzel is a Ph.D. and native English speaker, and very approachable.
- He was always willing to help and I really liked that he notified us of upcoming events like the math competition and lectures.
- Very good instructing, instructor has great knowledge of material, instructors ability to stay updated, class follows syllabus very well.
- Mr. Dotzel is an excellent instructor. My grade does not reflect what he has taught in this class, it is my own fault. It is incredible to watch someone lecture who has such a grasp of what they are teaching, and Ron Dotzel is certainly one of those who has full command of the topic. Thanks.

MATH 3000, Discrete Structures

- Professor Dotzel’s presentation style is very good. He has a good sense of humor, has an excellent command of the material, and does a very good job of answering questions and solving problems in class.
- Instructor is very friendly and fair. He only tests over material covered in class.
- Thorough presentation in lecture of the material. Student requirements are very clear.
- The instructor’s enthusiasm for mathematics is unparalleled.
- Mr. Dotzel is the best math teacher that I’ve ever had at UMSL. He is fair and communicates well. He knows how to teach and motivate others to learn. The course was successful only because Mr. Dotzel did a fantastic job teaching it.
MATH 4010, Financial Mathematics I  
FS2014, FS2013, FS2012,

- Dr. Dotzel is very funny, nice, and extremely approachable. I appreciated him posting the solutions and talking about them - this definitely helped toward the end of the course when things got more complicated. I felt like the tests were very fair, yet still challenging. The homework got very challenging toward the end of the class, which stretched my abilities and helped me grow in my knowledge of the subject. He is extremely passionate about and knowledgeable of this subject, which is contagious and keeps me engaged. The book did a pretty good job of explaining the concepts and there were a lot of good homework problems in there. Having the answers in the back of the book was extremely important. His grading is very fair.
- Dr. Dotzel does a good job of finding interesting problems and of seeing deeply into whatever problems he looks at.

MATH 4020, Financial Mathematics II  
SP2014, SP2013

- I liked that that we had a good book to go with the class. Also I liked that Dotzel was very knowledgeable of the material. I also liked that Professor Dotzel was creative.
- The professor does a good job of exploring nuances of the material.

MATH 4100, Real Analysis I  
FS2010, SP2009, SS2005

- Prof. took his time, made sure we understood material. Very effective at providing explanation in non-jargon-laden terms – invited understanding of terms via understating the concepts behind the vocabulary.
- Excellent instructor – well prepared, book good examples, easy to read. Good amount of homework use of mygateway, email. My 3rd course with Dotzel, I would take a class with him again if given the opportunity, and I would recommend him as well.
- Dr. Dotzel is a very good teacher. He managed to make a particularly boring and dry subject manageable and learnable.
- Like the feedback on the homework and how Dr. Dotzel breaks the complex concepts down to useful analyzes.
- The instructor. Prof. Dotzel was very energetic and entertaining. His passion for the subject was apparent in his teaching style.
MATH 4160, Complex Analysis I  SS2006

- The instructor’s personality and approachability.
- He has a sense of humor, is compassionate and passionate about his subject.

MATH 4200, Mathematical Statistics I  FS2010

- Learning applications of different variables. Lots of problem solving. Professor teaches many different methods for solving.

MATH 4350, Number Theory  SS2013, SS2011, SS2009, SS2007

- Number theory is a very interesting topic, Professor Dotzel is an excellent lecturer, and he really understands the material. He is always willing to help students understand the material, and welcomes questions. He also reviews all homework assignments and tests immediately after returning them.
- Instructor is extremely straightforward and fair. Subject material is challenging and engaging.
- Prompt return of work; lectured over the answers to homework; plenty of examples; proofs of theorems.
- The instructor focused on those elements he felt were most important that we master. He gave lots of relevant clear examples and was accessible for help/questions.

MATH 4400, Introduction to Abstract Algebra  SP2012, FS2008

- The material in this course was particularly engaging, and Dotzel's lectures are, as ever, delightful.
- Professor Dotzel keeps things interesting, and provides clear and comprehensive lectures which makes this complicated material understandable.
- I liked the textbook and the instructor’s method of teaching.
- Instructor makes it clear what is important and although material was challenging, Professor Dotzel always finds a way to explain it in a way many teachers can’t.
**MATH 4550, Combinatorics**  
*SS2014, SS2012, SS2010, SS2008*

- Combinatorics is an interesting and challenging branch of mathematics that can be applied to many situations in everyday life. Prof. Dotzel really knows the material and presents it well. It is clear that he enjoys teaching. I particularly like the fact that he goes over all homework assignments the day they are due & reviews all exams.
- The instructor makes coming to class an intellectually fascinating experience. Prompt solution explanations allowed me to learn from my mistakes.
- I have learned more in this course than any other course I have ever taken. The professor is extremely fair and is available for questions.
- I am graduating in 10 days with my MA and I can’t believe I’ve never had the pleasure of having Dr. Dotzel in all my year’s here for my BS and MA. I love the review problems, the classroom humor and how he genuinely wants his students to do well. Although I won’t be taking anymore classes here, I will definitely recommend Dr. Dotzel to my friends. The class was great – very fun.
- The instructor has an ability and willingness to stretch things at times and go into areas beyond the obvious.

**MATH 4800, Introduction to Topology**  
*SP2014, FS2007*

- I loved the material and I enjoy the instructor. I especially enjoy this instructor when he lectures on a subject that he loves. Always a pleasure to attend class. Additionally, I like that he gives the students guidance re: exam preparation. There are no surprises.
- I like the way the instructor developed the course and how the subject has been presented to the students. He has made us learn a tough course in mathematics in a very comfortable manner, by solving well selected and interesting problems ranging from the classic to the more creative ones.
- The instructor is very clear and presents well organized, informative and entertaining lectures. I enjoyed seeing another aspect of spaces hadn’t considered before.
- This was the most challenging and most interesting mathematics course, and probably overall course, I have ever taken. The material is wonderful, and so is the instructor. Prof. Dotzel is the best!!!
MATH 5100, Real Analysis II  FS2011

- Dr. Dotzel’s ability to “paint pictures” that assist with concept comprehension.
- Simple explanations were exceedingly helpful.

MATH 5110, Differentiable Manifolds  FS2014

- Prof. Dotzel really understands this material, and does a solid job of presenting it. He also welcomes questions from the class and works to explain material.
- Dr. Dotzel is excellent.

MATH 5140, Set Theory and Metric Spaces  SP2013

- Dr. Dotzel was particularly good at explaining concepts very clearly. He would explain things multiple times if they were complicated and interject humor occasionally, which is harder than it sounds for a Set Theory & Metric Spaces.

MATH 5420, Algebra  FS2004

- Very informative. The instructor outlined the entire course before we began, so we knew where we were headed. We covered enough material so that the course existed as a cohesive whole, not just the start of a beautiful subject. Dr. Dotzel is quite accessible.
- Dr. Dotzel’s style of lecture is very nice. I also enjoy the time he takes to explain the history of particular problems. The extra details he puts into explaining things help a lot as well.
- Dr. Dotzel explains mathematics extremely well, and has a contagious enthusiasm for the subject. Always enjoyable.
COURSE EVALUATION – ON-LINE STUDENT FORM

Course: ___________ Instructor: _________________________ Semester: _________

Evaluation of teaching is a critical component of our Department’s overall assessment of our faculty. One important factor in this assessment is the student evaluation of courses. This on-line evaluation is an attempt to obtain an objective assessment of this course.

We hope you will take some time to give an honest appraisal in completing this evaluation. Replies are completely anonymous.

1. Class Standing
   (Credit Hours)
   Freshman (0-24) Sophomore (24-59) Junior (60-89) Senior (90 and up) Graduate

2. Approximately how many hours per week did you spend outside of class working on the course? ______

3. Did your prerequisite course(s) prepare you for this course? Yes _____ No _____
   Course: _______ Grade: _____ School: _______

4. Does the instructor present the material in a well-organized manner? Low 1 2 3 4 5 High

5. How well does the instructor communicate in English? 1 2 3 4 5

6. Did you find the course challenging? 1 2 3 4 5

7. How much did you learn in the course? 1 2 3 4 5

8. What is your overall rating of the instructor of this course? 1 2 3 4 5

9. Grade you expect to receive in this course? _______

10. What do you particularly like (if anything) about this course?

11. What do you particularly dislike (if anything) about this course?

Please turn over and complete other side
EVALUATION OF ALTERNATE TEACHING METHODS

Answer only those parts (if any) that apply to the course

Part 1 – Working in Groups
1. What percentage of class time was spent using this method? 0% 25% 50% 75% 100%
2. Did the method enhance your learning experience? 1 2 3 4 5
3. How would you change the method?
4. Would you want to take another mathematics or computer science course that used this method? Yes _____ No _____
5. How many members do you prefer in your working group? _____

Part 2 – CourseCompass/Excel/iLrn/Maple/MathXL/Matlab/Minitab/MyMathLab/SAS Assignments
1. What percentage of class time was spent using this method? 0% 25% 50% 75% 100%
2. Did the method enhance your learning experience? 1 2 3 4 5
3. How would you change the method?
4. Would you want to take another mathematics or computer science course that used this method? Yes _____ No _____

Part 3 – Use of Technology by Instructor (My Gateway, PowerPoint Presentations, Web, etc.)
1. Briefly, describe the methods.
2. What percentage of class time was spent using this method? 0% 25% 50% 75% 100%
3. Did the method enhance your learning experience? 1 2 3 4 5
4. How would you change the method?
5. Would you want to take another mathematics or computer science course that used this method? Yes _____ No _____

Part 4 – Other Teaching Methods
1. Briefly, describe the methods.
2. What percentage of class time was spent using this method? 0% 25% 50% 75% 100%
3. Did the method enhance your learning experience? 1 2 3 4 5
4. How would you change the method?
5. Would you want to take another mathematics or computer science course that used this method? Yes _____ No _____
6. Do you have any additional comments about these new teaching methods?

Thank you for your cooperation.
CLASS OBSERVATION REPORT

Date: March 10, 2015
Class: Math 1900 Analytic Geometry and Calculus II
Instructor: Ron Dotzel

I observed a class taught by Dr. Ron Dotzel on March 10, 2015. This class covered a topic on the application of integrals to probability theory.

Dr. Dotzel came to the classroom a few minutes earlier. First he reminded the students of the coming event: Pi Day. After that he handed out the graded homework back to students one by one. It seems Dr. Dotzel knows the students very well and has created a friendly learning environment from the way he asked students to turn in the new homework assignment. Some students voluntarily helped to collect the assignments. As Dr. Dotzel mentioned to the students, at the beginning of the class, he would go over the problems of the returned homework. Usually, Dr. Dotzel prepares the notes for the homework solutions and would use the overhead projector to display the notes. However, the overhead projector did not work on that day. Because of this, the homework problem discussion was postponed to the end of the class. Dr. Dotzel also asked students to download the notes from his website.

The class lesson was about how the definite integral can be used for a probability calculation. In particular, the probability of a continuous random variable can be expressed as some definite integral of the probability density function. Dr. Dotzel started with a couple of very interesting examples to explain the concept of random variables. Then Dr. Dotzel moved to the topic of how to find the probability of an event by using integrals and how to find average values.

The lecture was well prepared. The examples discussed inspired the interest of the students for the topic. The concepts and examples were explained clearly. During the process of solving problems, Dr. Dotzel encouraged the students to participate and it seems the students enjoyed solving problems together. The teaching and learning communication between the instructor and the students went well. The instructor did create a very friendly learning environment as I first observed before the class started. The students asked questions without hesitation.

In addition, Dr. Dotzel not only just conveys the knowledge to the students, but also cares about the career development of the students. He told students of the importance of probability and statistics and encouraged them to take more courses on probability and statistics.

This was an outstanding lecture and I really enjoyed it.

Qingtang Jiang
Professor
March 16, 2015

Letter for Ron Dotzel's Nomination for Governor's Award for Excellence in Teaching

I am writing this letter in support of Dr. Ron Dotzel's nomination for the Governor's Award for Excellence in Teaching.

Ron has been a member of the mathematics faculty at the University of Missouri - St. Louis for over 30 years. I am very familiar with Ron's teaching, as I was the Associate Chair of the Department of Mathematics and Computer Science from 1992-2010, and Chair from 2010-2012. In those roles, I assigned the mathematics courses that Ron taught for the department, observed him teaching in the classroom, talked to students who were in his classes, and read the end of course student evaluations of his teaching.

Ron has taught a wide range of undergraduate and graduate courses over the years in a variety of areas, including algebra, analysis, probability and statistics, topology and manifolds, and financial mathematics. He has done outstanding work in all of these settings, consistently being rated very highly by his students on their end of course student evaluations.

Ron is very popular with his students. In addition to doing an outstanding job of presenting mathematical content, he has a reputation for mentoring and caring for students, as well as making them feel more connected to the department. He is viewed by his students as being a very approachable and welcoming instructor who has high standards and will work hard in assisting them to attain those standards.

Ron has been a truly invaluable contributor to the teaching and service mission of the department. He has served for several years as Advising Coordinator for all new undergraduate mathematics students. He has also been chair of the department's scholarship committee for many years, has organized mathematics competitions, and prepared students for the prestigious national Putnam exam that is given each year. Three years ago, he served on a multi-department committee that created a new Certificate in Actuarial Studies program. Since that time, he has taught the financial mathematics courses that students are required to take as part of this program.
Ron has always been willing to teach extra courses for the department when needed, as often happens when a new section of a course needs to be created at the last minute due to over enrollments. Ron also regularly offers special readings courses in mathematics at both the upper undergraduate and graduate levels for our students. This is a great service, particularly for students who are approaching graduation and need to take a course that is not regularly offered by the department.

In conclusion, Ron is an outstanding teacher who is also a wonderful colleague. Those qualities make him an ideal candidate for the Governors' Award for Excellence in Teaching. I support his nomination most enthusiastically.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Richard Friedlander
Founders Professor
Email: friedlanderr@umsl.edu
To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing today to express my support of Dr. Ron Dotzel’s nomination for the Governor’s Award for Excellence in Teaching. As a recent recipient of a BS in Mathematics from UMSL, I had the pleasure of taking a few classes with Dr. Dotzel. I am not at all surprised that Dr. Dotzel was nominated for this honor. Dr. Dotzel is an organized and thoughtful professor. He gets excited about his course material, and walks into the classroom every day knowing everything possible about the material he plans to cover. He also loves tackling new problems—whether in the classroom or during office hours, no homework problem is too complex or abstract for him. I took Dr. Dotzel’s Financial Mathematics courses in part because I needed to prepare for an actuarial exam administered by the Society of Actuaries. These exams are incredibly strenuous, and to fully prepare for them usually requires expensive online seminars. Dr. Dotzel’s classes were all I needed to prepare, and thanks to his effective teaching style, I truly understood the exam material.

Of course, Dr. Dotzel’s classes are more than an opportunity to learn course material. Dr. Dotzel truly goes above and beyond—encouraging his students to apply for scholarships they may not know about, or giving them opportunities to participate in rather prestigious math competitions. Further, Dr. Dotzel frequently brings speakers into his classes who have already obtained their math degrees and are putting their skills to use in the workplace—connecting sometimes introverted math students with professionals.

Dr. Dotzel is a skilled and caring professor—the type of professor who makes you enjoy his course, regardless of the subject. I cannot think of a more deserving candidate for the Award for Excellence in Teaching.

Sincerely yours,

Sarah Hamel
From: Mark Hamilton
Date: 3-18-2015
To: Nomination Committee

In support of Dr. Dotzel’s nomination for the Governor’s Award for Excellence in Teaching.

I had Dr. Dotzel as a professor for two senior level math courses during my last year at UMSL. I was a Liberal Studies major with no plans to work in the field of mathematics. I would like to speak about my experiences with Dr. Dotzel as a math enthusiast who was headed to Law School and let others speak to his ability to guide students to successful careers in mathematics.

The two classes I took were the first and second part of his Interest Theory class. Professor Dotzel helped me with two important things during my senior year. He took a great deal of time out of his own schedule to tutor me in preparation for the Putnam competition and provided assistance and advice in applying to Law Schools.

According to the Wikipedia page for the Putnam competition, it is widely considered the most prestigious college level math competition. To be frank, I realized that I did not stand a chance as soon as the questions were put in front of me on the day of the contest. Undoubtedly, Dr. Dotzel knew this well before the contest date.

When he announced the competition to the class, I was in the second to last semester of my undergraduate degree and had not yet fully engaged any part of my college experience.

Dr. Dotzel spent a full hour of his own time every Friday, helping me go over practice problems and strategies for the test every week for nearly a full semester. On the day of the competition, he spent nine hours of his Saturday to proctor the competition for me as well as another friend I had brought in from another department to compete.
I went to many different places and worked many different jobs before going to college. In the past, I told people that the only experience I have had the difficulty of which was not overrated, was high school wrestling practice. I include the Putnam competition alongside wrestling. Although participating in the competition did not benefit my career directly, it is one of the hardest things I have ever done and I am grateful to have been a part of it. If not for Professor Dotzel, I would have to tell people that I slid through my entire undergraduate without ever feeling genuinely challenged or fully engaged. Dr. Dotzel had no reason to believe I might actually place in the contest and bring glory to himself or the school; it was enough for him that I was interested in trying and gave an honest effort. He took preparation seriously every day despite the fact that I was not even a math major.

Dr. Dotzel was also a great help in advising me get into law school. I fell through the cracks as a liberal studies major without an assigned academic advisor. I had the grades to get into law school but did not have any activities or references and fell behind in preparing for the application process. He knew I was applying to law school through our conversations before and after class and volunteered to help and advise me in the application process. Without Dr. Dotzel’s help, (though I still would have been accepted to several law schools) I would not have been able to afford any of them. Although I am happy to be here at the University Of Tulsa Law School, the truth is that it is the only school I could afford to go to because of my limited finances and borrowing power.

Although I got good grades in difficult classes and knew many of my professors, Professor Dotzel is the only one who offered advice and a letter of recommendation. I have good reason to believe that my very generous financial aid package here at the University Of Tulsa would have
been significantly less without his letter and advice, and I would not be at law school if it were less than what it is.

It is a simple fact of the educational system that in a math class of 30 students, less than 30 of them are headed towards a career where they sit at a desk and solve math problems for a living. During the two classes I had with him, he provided numerous networking opportunities for students to get in touch with prior students who had entered the workforce in various fields, some that require a background in math and some where it is just a nice bonus on your resume.

Any professor is willing to help a high achiever who is interested in his line of work. What makes Dr. Dotzel better than average is his willingness to take students seriously: who perform at a lower level as well as those who have career interests in fields outside of math. What makes Dr. Dotzel exceptional is his ability to advise math students into careers that do not require advanced skill in math. He assists students with career goals completely unrelated to math without being the least bit condescending or offensive, and he will support a student along his or her individual path.

Respectfully,

Mark Hamilton

Hamilton1984@gmail.com
918-986-3885
My letter to your committee today is to represent my support for the nomination of Dr. Ron Dotzel for the University’s Governor’s Award for Excellence in Teaching. As a current and former student of Professor Dotzel, I have experienced what a joy it is to have him as a teacher. Professor Dotzel sets high expectations for all of his students, expecting that each and every one of them can and will achieve success in his classroom. He also does not give up on students that are struggling to meet those expectations, making sure that “if there is a will, there is a way” to success. Professor Dotzel keeps his classroom engaging and even in the long lectures of Calculus, he finds room to have fun, make class topics interesting and enjoyable. Professor Dotzel always goes out of his way to learn all of his students names and faces, making you feel less of a statistic and more of human being. He forms strong relationships and shows that he really cares about us as students. Dr Dotzel proves time and time again that he is a master of the mathematics subject matter that he teaches, showing expertise and presenting the material in a way that gives his students the drive to want to continue to learn and be successful in the class topics.

Professor Dotzel is an asset to the Department of Mathematics and Computer Science at our University. He is a hard working teacher that deserves high consideration to be recognized by this committee for this award.

Thank you for your time and his consideration,

Todd Hertzelle
University of Missouri - St Louis, Senior Computer Science Student
Dear Nomination Committee:

It is a delight to be able to write a letter of support for a great teacher like Dr. Dotzel! I had the privilege of having Dr. Dotzel for Intro to Topology in my first semester of undergrad work at the University of Missouri – St. Louis, and his strong knowledge of the material and engaging teaching style were a great benefit. In addition to having Dr. Dotzel in the classroom, I benefited from having him as my department adviser and as the coach of the Putnam team. I am very thankful for his work to challenge the best math students at the University of Missouri – St. Louis both in the classroom and by providing opportunities like the Putnam. As a grader for a class of his one semester, I was also able to observe his commitment to his students from that vantage point.

Dr. Dotzel is a dedicated and talented professor that University of Missouri - St. Louis should be very thankful for.

Sincerely,

Nathan Maichel