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Professor of Practice  
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CELEBRATING  
85 YEARS  
OF QUALITY EDUCATION AND RESEARCH  
IN MECHANICAL ENGINEERING



I have had the pleasure of collaborating with Kevin since Fall 2009, when he initiated a campus outreach effort as Teaching Assistant Coordinator for the required general education class, UN2001- Composition. I was very impressed by the extent of Kevin's instructional experience in teaching writing, by his insightful understanding of the student perspective as well as by his passion and dedication to cross-campus faculty collaboration to support student writing skill development.

As part of outreach efforts, Kevin organized meetings with faculty in science and engineering departments for the purpose of promoting coordinated writing instruction throughout the undergraduate experience. Kevin met with a group of faculty from my department to gain insights about engineering professional writing and writing course assignments so that he could better advise Composition instructors in their efforts to support communication skill development. Also, Kevin, who is a truly gifted communicator, was successful in demonstrating how the efforts of the Composition instructors provide students with a valuable base that engineering faculty can build upon to guide student development of discipline-specific communication skills. A clear outcome of Kevin's initiative was a shared understanding among faculty that students must continue communication skill development by practicing writing beyond the required Composition course.

Following his meeting with faculty from my department, Kevin worked with me to refine the department's junior level Engineering Design Process class, which had evolved over the years under the direction of multiple faculty to include a rather complex structure of scaffolded writing assignments. While this course had report templates, instructions and grade sheets, students were uncertain of expectations and work quality was inconsistent. Kevin met with me to review the templates and instructions. He drew from his understanding of students and writing instruction to pose probing questions ("What does this mean?" and "Exactly, what do you want students to write about here?") to help me understand where instructions, which seem clear to experienced engineers and faculty like me, were seldom understood by students. Kevin also helped me incorporate features of his grading style into grading rubrics to clarify expectations for students. Most importantly, he taught me to provide useful feedback in a form that my students can use to improve their communication skills. Through Kevin's help, my students now produce more consistent and higher quality work.

It has been my honor to work with Kevin. Kevin has the ability to bring people of differing perspectives together, establish common goals and succeed in endeavors to support student learning. Kevin has a clear understanding of the student perspective and is a gifted educator. I am confident that he will be a valuable asset as a faculty member.

Sincerely,

James P. De Clerck

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