

Sophie Thorup  
169 Howard St Apt 2  
Burlington, VT

September 13, 2018

Paul Besaw, Professor & Chair  
Department of Music and Dance  
The University of Vermont

Dear Professor Besaw:

As a former student of Professor David Feurzeig, I have experienced his excellent teaching, and I hope that the evidence of this letter will aid you in the process of his promotion. I was Dr. Feurzeig's student in Harmony and Form II (MU 110) in the Spring of 2015, and then worked as a Teaching Assistant in his MU 009 class in the Fall of 2016. As his student, I experienced a dynamic teaching style that combined expertise, forethought, and approachability. His encouragement played a role in my growth as a musician. As a TA, I was impressed by the care and commitment that he demonstrated.

Professor Feurzeig extended his dedication beyond the syllabus in his MU 009 class, for which I was a Teaching Assistant. The 3-credit class does not normally have the ear training lab associated with higher-level theory classes, and yet he felt that the students deserved more hands-on experience than a lecture could afford. So he created a lab: he hired two students to help teach it, and developed detailed lesson plans for these labs in addition to the lectures he would teach himself. In doing so, Professor Feurzeig showed a care of his students that went beyond the ordinary syllabus, and demonstrated a willingness to commit extra time and energy in order to ensure his students' success—not just in his classroom, but as musicians.

Professor Feurzeig's classes were educational and engaging. Their foundation was his obvious expertise in the subject: he can play anything off the cuff on piano, by ear or score, and I have never witnessed him unable to answer a question. Expertise does not engender excellence in teaching, necessarily. But Dr. Feurzeig combined his expertise with a dynamic teaching style. Theory was illustrated by the Beatles and Beethoven; students participated by listening, singing, and playing, in addition to more traditional practices. In addition to keeping students actively engaged, this was conducive to many different learning styles.

Complementing his teaching style, Professor Feurzeig manages to balance a personal enthusiasm for his subject and energy in class with an easygoing, approachable demeanor that makes students feel comfortable asking questions. Altogether, this makes Professor Feurzeig an invaluable resource of knowledge and musical advice for his students beyond the classroom.

Professor Feurzeig was also important to my development and self-image as a musician. As a music minor, my relationship with the department was not always clear (I ended up with far too many music credits for the minor requirements, but I was also clearly not a major). Yet Professor Feurzeig never appeared to take notice of the difference. I felt taken seriously as a student, and this motivated me to take myself seriously, and to keep pushing myself. Being asked to help with his MU 009 class was an important example of this. During my senior year, I ended up signing up for a 200-level composition and arranging class as the only minor, something I was comfortable doing largely due to his encouragement during my earlier years at UVM.

In conclusion, in the category of teaching/advising, I believe Professor David Feurzeig to be fully qualified based upon his commitment to his students and the success of his teaching as described above. I recommend Dr. Feurzeig *with the strongest possible terms*, and I hope that his application is successful.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'ST' followed by a stylized flourish.

Sophie Thorup