



Giuseppe Carabetta
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4 February 2010

Selection Committee to the Excellence in Tutoring Award 2010.

Dear Selection Committee,

Mr Mark Fisher, Casual Tutor, Business Law.

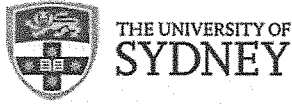
It is with great pleasure that I provide this reference for Mr Mark Fisher in support of his application for the Excellence in Tutoring Award 2010.

Mark has been a tutor and Senior Tutor in my first-year *CLAW1001* business law unit since 2005, having completed his Business Law honours thesis that same year. The Senior Tutor position is a critical one for *CLAW1001* – not only the largest Business Law unit but also the entry-level foundations unit – and I have been absolutely thrilled with the novel approaches Mark has introduced to the role and shared with the rest of the *CLAW1001* Teaching Team.

In my various dealings with students I regularly hear positive feedback about Mark's teaching. Students say that he not only comes across as being 'very knowledgeable', but that he listens respectfully and gives them positive reinforcement, while at the same time remaining honest with them. He appears to understand the learning process from *their* perspective; in particular, he has a rare ability to explain concepts and layer knowledge in a way that first-year non-law students can understand. He also has a real empathy for his students and responds to them as individuals, both key attributes of effective teaching.

Mark is able to challenge his students while at the same time being sensitive to their needs. Last semester, a number of students experiencing learning difficulties specifically requested to be transferred to his tutorials. He is interactive, encouraging and he succeeds in having a wide variety of students actively involved in class discussions. His enthusiasm for *CLAW1001* and positive attitude seems to be infectious and this is evident from the students' feedback. His friendly style ensures that international students and students from a Non-English-Speaking Background are keen to participate. He also understands the value of good *process*, something that is often taken for granted in tutorials. Students understand and appreciate that he takes the time to plan his classes not just 'get on with the subject matter'; this too is evident from their feedback.

Mark has also contributed to the development of *CLAW1001* and its ongoing revision. As unit coordinator I have reviewed his teaching materials and on the strength of their quality have incorporated some of them into the course. This includes a more detailed 'out-of-class preparation' schedule and reading guide, which is being trialled this coming semester. In terms of the aims and context of the course, he never teaches a precedent case as deciding a single point which is a problem which often occurs even at Law Schools as students rarely focus on the wider factual situation or the commercial implications of a decision.



Mark has been encouraged to collect evidence from a range of sources and listen to a variety of "voices" to help assess and improve his teaching and student learning (he has always been keen to embrace best practice ideas offered by others). To this end, in 2009 we arranged for Dr. Amani Bell, Lecturer, Institute for Teaching and Learning and former Tutor Development Program Coordinator, to peer-review his teaching. The review, which I understand will be part of his application, shows the very tangible outcomes that his unique approach to teaching yields. More significantly, he has also shown willingness (and courage!) to reflect on Dr Bell's feedback and refine and modify his approach particularly with respect to student-to-student interaction techniques.

As Senior Tutor one of Mark's key responsibilities was the collation of marks and analysis of student performance across all assessments, allowing me to incorporate this data into detailed, aggregate feedback for all students. A responsibility which he "made his own", was the mid-semester exam Review Day, a 4 to 8 hour feedback session following the students' first major assessment. I left Mark in charge of operating the review day in his second semester as Senior Tutor and then modifying it as he went along to better accommodate the students that were attending. He ultimately used the sessions not merely to reinforce the earlier written feedback, but to help students see the relationship between the assessment and other learning activities. The large numbers of students attending the sessions would suggest that the sessions were adding real value to their learning, while the number of students calling for additional feedback also fell significantly.

In 2009, the *CLAW1001* Teaching Team was awarded the Dean's Citation for Teaching for Semester 1. *CLAW1001* was the only Business Law unit to receive a Citation. As I explained to the teaching team at the time, this result would probably not have been achievable without Mark's efforts as Senior Tutor. I had been away at different points of the semester because of illness, and Mark on his own initiative dealt with virtually all the administrative matters during these periods. I was delighted when Mark himself was awarded the Dean's Citation for Tutoring the following semester.

There is a genuineness about Mark that allows me to assume that he will always perform at the highest standard. He has a strong sense of justice and a work ethic which is reflected in the extent of work he is prepared to do to assist students in their learning. His dedication towards his students in *CLAW1001*, particularly students experiencing learning difficulties, has always impressed me. He has been totally reliable at completing any task he volunteered to undertake and has always been happy to assist in mentoring newer tutors and support their learning.

In summary I commend Mark to you as an outstanding tutor and senior tutor. Like the many *CLAW1001* students who nominated him for this award over the years, I, too, firmly hope that he is successful.

Yours Sincerely,

Giuseppe Carabetta.