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Saturday, December 14, 2019

Dr. Edward Henninger
Dean, College of Business
Eastern Oregon University
One University Boulevard
La Grande, OR 97850

Re: Professor Wilson Zehr
Tenure

Sent via email

Dear Dr. Henninger:

I was asked by Professor Zehr if I would be willing to serve as a reference for the portfolio, which he is required to put together for his tenure review, which further requires input from alumni who have taken his classes. Rather than respond and affirm, I have chosen instead to write this letter of recommendation to you and copy it to him for his portfolio.

By way of background, the letterhead will tell you I am in the medical field, but what it doesn't say is that it had been 45 years since I had been in an academic milieu. Continuing medical education is not the same as taking classes, submitting assignments and taking exams, and quite frankly, at 69 years of age when I began my studies for the MBA, I didn't know if I still had it in me. I also had never experienced online learning, since Al Gore hadn't yet invented the internet when I graduated from medical school in 1974.

I'm not sure I expressed to Dr. Zehr at the time, but his online course was accompanied by repeated invitations to attend speaker's presentations, mostly EOU alumni from the College of Business, which we could attend live, or via videotape. Some, but not all, were required, so it was a fun exercise to get a little actual or virtual classroom together with the online part, which had none of that. As I recall, this was the only class in my entire five terms as an MBA student that had this option. In attendance at some of the extra meetings for a business student group he had, I actually met Dr. Zehr, who was very personable and seemed personally interested in me, as well as his other students at the meeting.

Subsequently, in an assignment for Dr. Keller, I interviewed the CEO, Jeremy Davis of Grande Ronde Hospital, who is also an MBA and expressed to me an interest in being academically involved with EOU. I put him in touch with Dr. Zehr, and have since learned that Jeremy, also an MBA, has actually been able to speak to one of Dr. Zehr's classes recently.

I say all this to illustrate that Dr. Zehr went the extra mile for me, and for others who may have apprehension as well, to treat us as graduate students and encourage us as well. His assignments were supplied with extra references beyond the text and inspired significant thought in submission of assignments. I didn't realize it then but do now after just completing my courses for the MBA, that Dr. Zehr laid down a solid foundation for what was to come, and from which I gained a rapid and thorough understanding of basic economic marketing. This was extremely helpful to me especially, since to even qualify for entry into an MBA program, I'd been required to take some online prerequisites in business. Apparently, a BA in Biology, and MD together had only one economics credit, so Dr. Zehr made that jump interesting and very valuable for me.

In summary, Dr. Zehr is actively engaged with encouraging education in his students, even arranged frequent extra-curricular activity which further encourages engagement of his students. In retrospect, his course gave me solid foundational building blocks from which to better benefit from the remainder of my studies. Please, do not let him get away.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "James R. Kopp, MD". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping initial "J".

James R. Kopp, MD
(And soon, hopefully, MBA)