



## 2021 Recipient of the Distinguished Advising Award

### Jacob W. Craig



In their nomination letter, his colleagues in the Department of English describe the arrival of Professor Jacob Craig in 2016 as a gift that the department didn't quite know it needed. A half decade later, he is a gift that keeps on giving. Professor Craig not only ably serves his own individual advisees within the major, but also additional students whom he advises in his role as director of the Writing, Rhetoric & Publication concentration and minor. Additionally, and uniquely, his exemplary advising extends to all English majors through his innovative leadership in preparing students for post-graduation professional opportunities, which he does through his development of professionalization programs for students as well as sharing his expertise with department faculty. Indeed, his colleagues report that the department has come to rely upon him as its in-house "advising guru."

When advising students, Professor Craig makes a point of helping them define, work toward, and reach specific academic and professional goals in their very near and more distant futures. His efforts are appreciated by students who acknowledge his role in their success. This advisee comment is typical:

I owe quite a bit of my academic success to Dr. Craig. His advice led me to graduate on time with a solid transcript, a degree I am passionate about, and an acceptance letter into a law program.

As an adviser Professor Craig fosters connections with, between, and among students, faculty, campus resources, and post-graduation professional opportunities. The awards selection committee was especially impressed with Professor Craig's efforts in shepherding students toward professional

careers in which they can thrive while making use of the knowledge gained and skills they developed as English majors. In the words of his colleagues:

We are responsible for shaping students' lives at a key moment in their personal, social, and professional development. The liberal arts tradition has generally focused on those first two areas of development, the personal and social, with great success. But there has been some hesitancy in leaning into that last area of student development, attending to their professional lives.

They go on to say:

It is no exaggeration to state that since his arrival at the college Professor Craig has transformed the English major; one significant contribution is his modeling for other faculty methods for advising students in terms of their varied future professional opportunities by providing students curricular and extra-curricular training and developing their agency in managing their careers immediately upon graduation and beyond.

This professionally-oriented dimension of Professor Craig's advising is routinely remarked upon and is much appreciated by his advisees. As one of his advisees puts it:

Dr. Craig does more to prepare his students for post-graduation employment than any professor I have encountered at the College. He sends us job ads, helps us create resumes and other professional documents, and brings in alumni to talk with us about their careers. Dr. Craig is the reason I feel confident that I will be able to get a job after graduation.

Professor Craig has done much to extend the scope of advising outreach within his department by emphasizing the importance of professional guidance as well as academic advice, to the benefit of his own advisees, his departmental colleagues, and the English majors they serve. In doing so, he has demonstrated that the liberal arts in general—and humanities such as English studies in particular—remain vitally relevant even in this digital age, by serving the needs of our students, the professions they enter, and society at large.