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Thomas R. Shemanske
Department Chair

March 10, 2006

Mr. Joseph Asch
12 Woodrow Road
Hanover, NH 03755

Dear Mr. Asch,

On behalf of the Department of Mathematics at Dartmouth College, I would like to thank you for your generosity in funding our participation in the Departmental Editor Program for the last two and a half years. During that time, our departmental writing specialist has worked with faculty members teaching a variety of courses and with numerous individual students, all of whom have appreciated her time and expertise in writing instruction.

Professor Jody Trout writes about the “Mathematics and Science Fiction course that [Professor of English] Laurence Davies and I co-taught in Winter 2004. [The departmental writing specialist] helped students with writing their essays and short stories. We were very grateful for her help as we noticed improvement in the students’ writing over previous years.”

Professor Dwight Lahr writes that in his course *The World According to Mathematics*, “students have had to write a paper, and give a class presentation based on a written report. [. . . The departmental writing specialist’s] consultative work with students has noticeably improved their final submissions and raised the overall level of the course.” Professor Lahr also reports that in *A Matter of Time*, a course he co-taught with Professor of Spanish and Portuguese and of Comparative Literature Beatriz Pastor, because of the writing specialist’s participation “student writing reached a new level of excellence.”

Professor Lahr adds the following about working with the departmental writing specialist: “We work together as colleagues. I value her opinions and regularly consult her about both individual students and curricular matters. She has expertise that I do not possess, but that I need if I am to give students the kind of education they need. I firmly believe that in a course like Math 5 we should teach students to communicate their technical ideas to a general public. [The writing specialist] plays a crucial role in the overall process of coaching students to do that, one that I would fulfill in a less satisfying way. Given a choice, I would not choose to teach Math 5 without her.”

Professor Marcia Groszek, who has worked with the departmental writing specialist in a writing course on the mathematics and philosophy of the infinite, echoes these sentiments:

“Having a second reader in addition to myself, and furthermore a second reader with much expertise in the teaching of writing, has been valuable to my students. Working together with a colleague who is trained and experienced in the teaching of writing has been invaluable to me. Our discussions both about the teaching of writing and about our responses to individual student papers, carried on in the extended context of a term-long course, have improved my understanding of how to teach writing.”

I hope these representative comments give you an idea of how valuable the program has been to our department, and how much the expertise of our departmental writing assistant has contributed to our courses, our students, and ourselves. Once again, thank you for your great generosity in supporting this program.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "T.R. Shemanske". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping initial "T".

Thomas R. Shemanske
Professor of Mathematics