17 December, 2006

UCLA Department of Mathematics
Program in Computing
6356 Mathematical Sciences
Box 951555
Los Angeles, CA 90095-1555

Attn: Applied Mathematics Search Committee
Department of Mathematics and Statistics
California State University, Chico
Chico, CA 95929-0525

Dear Committee Members:

This is a recommendation on behalf of **Dr. Michael W. Leonard**, a capable applied mathematicians and stellar teacher who is applying for a faculty position. Dr. Leonard completed four years as a postdoctoral Adjunct Assistant Professor in the UCLA Mathematics Department, where he taught not only mathematics but also computing courses as part of our Program in Computing unit (PIC), which teaches programming to undergraduates[1].

Dr. Leonard's research is in nonlinear optimization. He is well regarded for his knowledge, accomplishment, and interactivity by our applied mathematicians.

Dr. Leonard was always a strong teacher for us, and with experience became outstanding. In the last four courses that he taught, anonymous student evaluations on our 9-point scale averaged **8.21**. In one course, **75%** of the students gave a rating of **9**! He also taught an undergraduate seminar in optimization, of his own design, to positive reviews. Dr. Leonard's style as a teacher is to give students copious amounts of individual help so that they can achieve at a high level. Students report that they learn a great deal this way. Some written student comments:

> "Extremely knowledgeable of the material. Very clear explanations. Lots of energy in lecture. Overall one of my best teachers yet."

[1] PIC, which has the purpose of teaching computing to undergraduates in Letters and Science, is distinct from the UCLA Computer Science Department, which teaches Engineering students. The PIC instructors are mathematicians with a strong capability in computing. As postdocs, they interact with the other mathematics faculty.

> "Leonard is a very energetic and entertaining professor who seems to like what he does. He is extremely knowledgeable of the subject material and very helpful away from class."
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> "He's an excellent instructor. Patient and humorous."
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> "Leonard is an awesome professor. Really knows his stuff, one of the best professors I've had here. Truly cares about his students and works very hard to make sure everyone understands everything."
>
> "Leonard rocks, best teacher I've had, loves the material, class & teaching & it shows (otherwise he's a damn good actor). He has a lot of energy. Keep it up."
>
> "Professor Leonard is by far the best professor I have had at UCLA. He is interactive during lectures, helpful outside and very instructive. I appreciate his teaching and I feel I have learned much from him. There is nothing he can do to be better, just stay great as you are."
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> "He is a great instructor and very helpful for students who have a chance to study with him."
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> "Professor's class notes were extremely helpful, and well organized. He was also very concerned about student learning."
>
> "Professor Leonard is an extremely effective, clear, thorough professor. He presents the information in a thoroughly understandable manner. I find his availability via VOH, e-mail, office hours, and PIC lab hours to be quite impressive and have benefited greatly from his class." [VOH = Virtual Office Hours, meaning on-line help]

As a colleague, Mike Leonard is interactive and helpful. It is a pleasure to recommend him for a faculty position. He will do very well.

Sincerely,

Kirby A. Baker
Professor of Mathematics, Emeritus
Director, Program in Computing, to 2005