

Date: January 21, 2019

Dear Department Personnel Committee,

I'm writing to report my observations of Dr. Eric Edlund's Physics 201 lecture on March 30, 2018. I arrived in the classroom about five minutes before the start of class and I took extensive notes during the lecture. Dr. Edlund was present in the classroom when I arrived and student attendance was good. Dr. Edlund began the class with a PollEverywhere question to review the math concepts of vector dot product and vector cross product. All responding students got the questions correct. He then went on to review recently graded lab reports.

The bulk of the lecture addressed the physics of work and the interconversion of potential energy and kinetic energy. Dr. Edlund began with the question "how do we calculate work?" He used several simple demonstrations in his lecture including a pendulum and a tossed ball and focused on how potential energy is converted to kinetic energy. His lecture was more mathematical than qualitative. Although this is very much appropriate for the course, at times I felt that the students might have benefited from more context. The use of integral calculus in the lecture was appropriate for PHY 201, since the catalog description for the course includes the phrase "fundamental principles of motion and dynamics using the methods of calculus" and PHY 201 has MAT 121 or MAT 135 as a prerequisite. Speaking as a member of the Chemistry Department, I believe the level of mathematical used by Dr. Edlund serves our majors well and provides a needed transition between the mathematics used in Gen Chem (entirely algebra) and the mathematics used in Physical Chemistry (differential equations).

Students felt comfortable asking questions throughout the lecture and Dr. Edlund addressed each student by name. At several times, however, I sensed that students did not understand Dr. Edlund's explanations and that some students may have been a bit frustrated. I expect that with more experience, Dr. Edlund will become adept at fine tuning his answers to student questions and will be better able to anticipate concepts that confuse students.

Several days after my classroom visit, Dr. Edlund and I met to discuss my observations. Much of our conversation was centered on how he could provide more context and scaffolding in his lectures. We have subsequently met on multiple occasions to discuss how he could improve his teaching. In all of my interactions with Dr. Edlund, I have found him to be open to constructive criticism and dedicated to improving his teaching. It is my expectation that overtime he will become an excellent teacher.

Sincerely,



Frank Rossi
Associate Professor of Chemistry
Dept. of Chemistry, SUNY Cortland