

ROBERT B. CARTON

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To Whom It May Concern:

It is my pleasure to recommend David Hayes. I have worked with David at Western Carolina University as a colleague and prior to joining our faculty, he acted as a judge and mentor for student teams in my classes for five years. During this time, I have come to know David as an academic colleague, a serial entrepreneur, and a friend. I would like to address each of these roles that David has played.

ACADEMIC COLLEAGUE

I first worked with David as an outside expert providing feedback to student teams in my capstone class. The students, my colleagues, and I had such a positive experience working with David that when an academic position opened up in our discipline, we were very pleased that he agreed to join our faculty.

I quickly learned that students found him very engaging and enlightening. He brought a special mix of academic rigor plus real world experience to the classroom that few other professors do. In my interactions with David, I learned a great deal about branding and positioning, as well as leadership for new and existing ventures to add to my classes. He has a unique ability to understand all the functional areas of business and how they combine to create successful new ventures.

David has been an integral part of reviewing and improving our curriculum over the past several years. He brought our faculty outstanding industry experience mixed with a clear understanding of the underlying theoretical underpinnings for a successful program. He has been a strong advocate for our program and our students.

Finally, even though research was not part of his job requirements at WCU, David has been become engaged in basic and applied research. He has developed teaching cases and other pedagogical works that he has published and/or implemented in his classes. He has been working with colleagues on basic research about entrepreneurial traits and behaviors that holds great promise.

SERIAL ENTREPRENEUR

Over the past many years I have observed and worked with David on several new venture projects. These projects have added to the economic development of the region. David is organized and focused in the execution of the plan. He not only conceptualizes well, he can turn plans into reality.

FRIEND

David and I met as colleagues, but he has become a valued friend. David has always been there to support me professionally; however, what I truly value is that he is always willing to be there

for me personally. He is a confidant whose sense of humor makes difficult times seem easier to handle.

I was the department head when David was hired at WCU. I am very proud that we were able to attract him to our faculty and grateful for all of the contributions that he has made over the years. I hope that it has become clear that I hold David Hayes in the greatest respect as both an academic and professional colleague. It is a pleasure to recommend him to you without reservation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R. B. Carton', written in a cursive style.

Robert B. Carton, Ph.D.