



Dear Members of the Award Selection Committee,

I am writing you in support of Professor Robert L. Martinez's nomination for this year's University of Colorado at Colorado Springs Outstanding Teaching Award. Professor Martinez's immersive approach to history not only motivates and engages his students, but his work in the Reacting to the Past (RTTP) pedagogy also promises to change the way history courses are taught in both Community College and University classrooms. Dr. Martinez and I first met when a mutual student of ours, Chris Bairn, introduced us shortly after Professor Martinez was hired; our meeting yielded a conversation about Reacting to the Past, a curriculum he pioneered at UCCS and aided in the implementation of at Pikes Peak Community College. Reacting to the Past is an immersive, game-based curriculum that places students at the center of historical debates; these students must react to their classmates in competing factions by producing both argumentative writings and speeches based on classical works.

Speaking to his strong sense of collegiality, Dr. Martinez encouraged me to audit several of his Reacting classes to witness the pedagogy in action. The students in his class constantly remarked how much they studied and collaborated with each other to meet the objectives of their characters and the game, thereby meeting the objectives of the course. Even the students who did not like the game itself still credited Dr. Martinez with making the course interesting and history relevant to their academic and professional experiences, speaking specifically to the soft skills he taught and reinforced throughout the curriculum. Ms. Atzje Deubach, a UCCS Student, sums up this experience nicely: "I believe that the experience of RTTP improved my own skills of research, analysis, and perhaps most importantly an ability to think 'outside the box'.... RTTP differs from any other classroom exercise I have experienced in that I was not a simple bystander in my own education, but rather I was the driving force of it." Witnessing experiences like this one in Dr. Martinez's classroom, which exemplifies perfectly a flipped classroom environment, I was taken aback at the level of deep learning taking place with his students, that I immediately began to pilot this curriculum at PPCC.

Working with Dr. Martinez inspired me to write a grant for the Colorado Immersive and Game-Based Faculty Challenge Grant funded by the Colorado Community College System; with his collaboration, we won \$99,133.90 to spread Reacting Curriculum in the State of Colorado and to create shorter, "chapter-length" games, geared for freshman survey courses. He has been instrumental in the brainstorming, planning, and executing this grant; he will run "The Trail of Galileo" game at the Reacting to the Past Regional Conference hosted by PPCC this April. Dr. Martinez's collaboration with Pikes Peak Community College represents a core part of a partnership already begun by faculty at PPCC and UCCS; this partnership focuses on how we as faculty, through an open dialogue, can improve our teaching methods in the classroom to impact student success. The work Dr. Martinez and I have engaged in with Reacting has gained nationwide attention from the Reacting Consortium at Barnard College in New York City. Dr.




Communications, Humanities, & Technical Studies Division

Mark Carnes, Professor of History at Columbia and Executive Director, states in his letter of support for our grant proposal that "PPCC may well be our finest community college team and we [the Reacting Consortium] think that their project may serve as a pilot for transforming the Reacting-community college initiative throughout the nation." This could not be possible without Dr. Martinez's sound advice and collaboration.

We have started the Rocky Mountain Collaboration: A Reacting to the Past Project; Dr. Martinez is also serving on my Editorial board, where he is helping me to vet proposals of chapter games, to give award recipients feedback on their deliverables, and to develop the assessment and research of these games effectiveness. This work is critical: it not only impacts students both at Community Colleges and Universities across Colorado, but also students nationally and internationally. Dr. Carnes has expressed interest in the results of our grant; he sees the data from this project being central in obtaining additional funding from either the Lumina Foundation and/or the National Endowment for the Humanities. Dr. Martinez's work on this project strongly reflects the supportive, professional environment created by UCCS, not to mention his great passion for bringing a quality educational experience to students.

When he is not conducting research in Spain, writing articles and books, or presenting at Conferences, Dr. Martinez helps his students to learn history kinetically by helping to build his students' trebuchet. The manner in which Professor Martinez engages his students inside and outside the classroom is commendable. As an alumnus of the University of Colorado at Colorado Springs and the current 2013 Faculty of the Year at Pikes Peak Community College and with the National Institute for Staff and Organizational Development (NISOD), I am continually impressed by Professor Martinez's sincerity in his student and collegial relationships, his academic integrity, and most of all his ability to teach and impart history to his students.

Sincerely,



Glenn Rohlfing, Assistant Professor of History
Phi Theta Kappa Co-Advisor
Communications, Humanities and Technical Studies
Pikes Peak Community College, The Downtown Studio Campus, Room S226
100 West Pikes Peak Avenue
Colorado Springs, CO 80903

Phone: (719) 502-3462
Cell: (719) 329-8255
Fax: (719) 502-3010