

RUSTY LUCAS
P.O. Box 422
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September 24, 2004

University of Notre Dame
Institute for Scholarship in the Liberal Arts
c/o Gretchen Reydams-Schils
343 Decio Faculty Hall
Notre Dame, IN 46556

Dear Ms. Reydams-Schils:

Please be so kind as to forward a copy of the enclosed letter to your academic dean's office as I am sure it will be of interest to all in that department. Please also forward this to any other department which might be in charge of research grants and/or financial aid if you deem the material and request to be appropriate.

I am, what some may call (including myself), a letter writer. By calling myself that, I mean that I write letters. It really isn't a career or vocation, although I really think that it could be. There just hasn't been any actual money in it. I know that with the advent of the Internet, e-mail, and instant messaging, the act of writing letters is rapidly becoming a lost art. I aim to stop that trend. I am not a fool thinking that the Internet and e-mail will go away. I know that these are the mediums of the future and that the future is now. I just want to hold onto the old fashioned way of communicating and make sure that it doesn't disappear altogether.

I am just doing some checking to see if Notre Dame offers (or would be willing to start) a grant for letter writing. If this requires a formal proposal, please provide me with the necessary details and I will cheerfully fill out any paperwork and provide references and writing samples. I have written to a number of reputable companies and I have received replies to many of those letters.

See, that is the key to letter writing, especially if it becomes a career like I am trying to make it. Salesmen are graded by their number of sales, doctors are measured by their successful medical procedures, a baseball player's success depends on his batting average, and sanitation workers base their occupational evaluations on how many bags of garbage they collect per hour. Those are objective standards which are all easily and readily known by the general public. But letter writing is a little bit different. The success of a letter writer is a little more subjective, but the single quantifiable measure of a letter writer's success, in my opinion, is his response rate. How many letters has he written and how many responses has he received?

I am pleased to inform you that I have a 55.3% response rate as of September 24, 2004. I won't go into the sheer numbers here as we are talking about an overall average being the important factor here. But I assure you that I have written more than 46 letters in the past year. (Keep in

mind that the percentage could change as much as 7% in the next few days depending on my incoming mail). But I feel that I can get that up to approximately 75% if I only had some grant funding my letter writing activities.

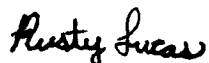
If funding a grant is not an option, I don't suppose you have any positions open for an instructor for a college course in letter writing that I might be able to teach? I would be most willing to fill any such vacancy on your staff if the terms of the position meet with my needs. Would that have the potential to grow into a tenured position?

If your letter writing staff of instructors is currently full, is there any community college nearby that might be more appropriate for me at this time? I know I may have missed the start of the fall semester or quarter by the tardiness of this letter, but I wanted to boost my response average a bit before mailing this letter to you and that may have cost me a few weeks. But you see, each time a new letter is sent reduces the return average by a bit unless and until a response comes back in. That is just simple mathematics; however, you have to send out letters in order to get the responses. So with that simple understanding, you can see why it is so important to compose the letters in a way most likely to evoke a response from the addressee. Otherwise you are just working against yourself.

Perhaps if I were to receive a letter writing grant or fill a vacant instructor position, I would be able to really boost my response rate. But if you think I might improve my skills at a local community college, I would be happy and cheerful to do so. Do you remember the movie *Rudy*? It would be just like that except I would be a letter writing instructor instead of a college football player. I could even see them filming a sequel or a remake to *Rudy* and instead call it *Rusty*. In that case, I would try to get Elijah Wood to play my role.

Please consider my thoughts and let me know if you can help me with a grant or with a full time teaching position. Also, being the Catholic institution that you are, I would hope that you aren't dishonest enough to not respond to me and then later use my decreased response rate (due to your own non-response) as the justification for turning me down. Even if you cannot help me, please write back so that I might then have a shot at getting a grant or tenure at some other lesser educational institution, like the Ohio State University or Slippery Rock University.

Sincerely,



Rusty Lucas

p.s. Do you have any spare UND baseball caps around that you have no use for? If so, would you be generous enough to send me one for free? I spend much of my disposable income on stamps and other post office fees, so if you could send it to me for free that would really help me out. Which brings the following question to mind: if I were to be hired as a letter writing instructor, could I be reimbursed for all postage fees related to mailing letters as part of my salary and benefits package?