

2024 Virgil Orr Junior Faculty Award Nomination Packet

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Assistant Professor

Department of Management and Sustainable Supply Chain Management

I am extremely honored and humbled to be nominated for the 2024 Virgil Orr Junior Faculty Award! When I joined the Louisiana Tech University faculty in September 2022, I knew that I had found a home after the Air Force for me and my family based on the culture and values embodied by this institution and community. I have been welcomed with open arms by the faculty, staff, and students, so it has been my pleasure to give back to Louisiana Tech by pouring my heart out through teaching, mentorship, research, and service involvement. Thank you for giving me this opportunity to highlight some of my accomplishments and to help you get to know me a little better.

Teaching Philosophy

In today's ever-changing world characterized by uncertainty and opportunity, I believe successful supply chain managers must be able to think critically, work together to solve difficult problems, and be life-long learners. Throughout my 23 years as a military supply chain management professional, I have internalized these beliefs to continually improve myself personally and professionally, and I strive to drive home these concepts to my students at Louisiana Tech.

To be successful in this endeavor, I believe teaching must be about the students themselves, not the educator. My goal is to make a difference in their lives through teaching, engagement, and mentorship. Therefore, I feel the classroom should be centered around the student to give them the best opportunity to be successful. To achieve this, I get to know my students and learn about their strengths and weaknesses while being available to them as a mentor whenever they may need it. This allows me to create a learning environment where everyone feels free to share their ideas and participate in class, and it allows me to tailor the learning experience to take advantage of the unique personalities of each student. No two students are the same, and I do not believe any two classes should be the same either.

Benjamin Franklin said, "Tell me and I forget, teach me and I may remember, involve me and I learn." This quote may be just words on paper to some, but these words are integral to my views on teaching. I believe it is necessary to make the learning experience tangible to the students so they can understand the full range of the what, how, and why of supply chain management. I use a combination of experiential learning tools such as simulation games in MGMT 474, case studies in both MGMT 333 and MGMT 474, and group projects in MGMT 474 to bring the supply chain material to life. I lean on professional experience and personal relationships to gain opportunities to bring real-world, challenging projects to the classroom. Involving my students as active participants in the learning process and presenting them with opportunities to use what they have learned to solve meaningful organizational problems helps hone their critical thinking skills and sets them up for future academic and practitioner success.

I have had the opportunity to lead large organizations to the pinnacle of success in the United States Air Force, but nothing excites me more than having the opportunity to teach and mentor the future leaders here at Louisiana Tech. I take my role as a teacher and advisor to heart, and I will continue to set an exemplary personal and professional example to my students in order to help gain their trust and to bring out the best in them.

My style of teaching and mentoring was immensely helpful on November 13, 2023 when an assailant viciously stabbed four victims here on campus. One of my students was the primary witness to the stabbings, and he was understandably shaken up. He called me within minutes of the event and explained what happened, unsure of what to do and unsure of how to feel. I used my wartime experience where I responded to IED attacks and

personally transported victims to Afghanistan hospitals to help me understand what he was going through because I had been there. I was able to help him navigate his feelings so he could decompress, and I provide a listening ear to this day. In response to this event and actions, his mother wrote this email to Dr. Les Guice where it in part stated:

“My youngest son was getting out of his truck yesterday morning to go to bowling when he heard screaming. He witnessed the horrific stabbings and according to law enforcement was the main witness because he was able to describe the assailant in detail... down to the Cowboys’ toboggan and blue puffer jacket with a bleeding hand. They found him within minutes.... His professors have been AMAZING... considering it is finals week. His Management professor who’s retired military has been a God send helping through this.”

Students are my passion, and teaching and mentoring are the tools I use to make a difference.

Course Evaluations

Quarter	Course #	Class Size	Avg GPA	Rating	Department	College	University
SP23/24	MGMT 650	1	Current Quarter				
SP23/24	MGMT 474	19	Current Quarter				
SP23/24	MGMT 333	62	Current Quarter				
W23/24	MGMT 333	62	2.85	Not Released Yet			
F23/24	MGMT 333	40	2.66	3.9	3.6	3.6	3.7
SP22/23	MGMT 474	29	3.14	*			
SP22/23	MGMT 333	60	2.61	*			
W22/23	MGMT 333	59	2.71	*			
F22/23	MGMT 333	35	2.52	4.0	3.7	3.6	3.6
* W22/23 and SP22/23 evaluations were lost during the email merge; however, my overall evaluation rating for all courses in 22/23 is a 3.9 and for all courses in 23/24 is a 3.9							

Student Evaluations

- I cannot say enough good things about Professor Roberts! I went into this class a little afraid, knowing MGMT 333 as a harder class everyone talks about. But Mr. Roberts has made in enjoyable and manageable. He explains the material well, even explaining or working problems over and over until we get it. He incorporates fun like jeopardy games and telling fun stories related to the material. No doubt this class has been a challenging subject, but I thank Mr. Roberts for making it a great experience. If you are reading this, thank you! Your hard work, care for your students, and dedication to your job do not go unnoticed!
- I think Dr. Roberts is an amazing professor, and initially, I was very worried about taking this class because it has a reputation for being difficult, but he actually made it enjoyable to show up to class and he makes the material matter to his students.
- One of the best professors in my three years at Tech. He is very understanding; he wants you to learn the material and pass; he gives you a ton of resources that will help you, despite being a difficult class.
- Often regarded as one of the hardest courses in the undergrad COB programs, this class was highly enjoyable under Mr. Roberts. Though the class is still difficult through the amount of material provided, Mr. Roberts makes the class entertaining, engaging, and pleasant. Roberts makes this usually painful class a great time, not to mention his interest in the subject seems very high.

- I really admire Dr. Roberts. He is a wonderful professor and makes learning MGMT 333 easy to understand and fun. It is easy to see that he cares for his students and wants us to do well in his class. He offers available zooms to go over extra work if it is needed. He answers quickly to emails and is very attentive. I was worried about this class before it started, but it has turned out to be one of my favorites and Dr. Roberts being one of my favorite professors to come by thus far.
- Dr. Roberts is possibly one of the best professors I've experienced thus far in my education. He truly cares about his students, provides relevant information, and is understanding of difficult, busy, conflicting schedules. Many professors in the College of Business should strive to offer students what Dr. Roberts provides.
- I would say that Professor Roberts is one of my favorite professors. He was really easy to listen to and made that kind of connection that you want from a teacher.
- Dr. Roberts is a very entertaining teacher and finds the perfect balance between preparing us for the test and genuinely teaching the information.
- Best teacher for MGMT 333 and he funny and engaging. I love jeopardy!!!
- Best Professor!
- He was perfect
- Best teacher in the COB
- YOURE THE BEESTTTT
- Great professor!

Research Philosophy

My research philosophy can be defined in one word... relevancy. That may seem like a simple answer but let me explain. Most of my research to date has focused on the intersection of safety and operations. I chose this because it is a very personal topic for me. Before I entered the master's program at the Air Force Institute of Technology (AFIT), I was stationed at MacDill Air Force Base and was in charge of the deployment and distribution functions. I had a great relationship with the people there. Shortly before I graduated from AFIT, I received a call from one of them and they were crying. One of my former Airmen was killed in a workplace accident when a large KC-135 refueling boom fell off a loading dock and crushed her. After the safety report was released by the Air Force I was able to read it and found out the reasons for the accident. They were twice as busy as normal that day, the piece of equipment they were loading required a minimum of 3 people (they only had 2 working on it that day), and the dolly they were using to move the equipment was substandard. The brakes failed on the dolly and that's why the equipment fell off the loading dock.

When I was stationed there, the first thing we did is make sure we had enough people working in each area. This is doable because the offices are made up of people in the same career field, so we can flex manpower when needed. That wasn't done that day. I couldn't understand why Emily decided to move that piece of equipment without getting more help. Was she feeling rushed? Why were they using substandard equipment to move things? I found out it's the same equipment they used when I was there, so I felt a little bit responsible because I should have realized that and fixed the issue. This incident made me think about the culture of the organization and the impact it was having on the personnel. We lost a great person that day, and her best friend also left the Air Force because she witnessed the tragic event. She couldn't handle seeing her friend die like that, and who could blame her? Productivity stopped for a while because of this, so people and performance were impacted. I dug a little bit more into literature and when I went back for my PhD, I came across the idea of safety climate. This topic has been the main focus on my research. The reason for this is I want to help people build better safety programs for

high-risk supply chain management type functions, and I want to help inform managers how to balance operations and management in such a way that leads to greater safety and operational performance. My safety research pays respect to SSgt Emily Clayburn.

Now I'm delving into pandemic operations and supply chain resiliency because of how important those topics can be from a theoretical and practical standpoint. I want to be able to make solid contributions, yes to theory, but more importantly for organizations themselves. Being from New Orleans, I see how hurricanes can disrupt the supply chain in localized places. We have all experiencing the supply chain disruptions during the pandemic, and there are many opportunities to better understand how these types of disruptions impact the supply chain and how to be better prepared in the future. So, relevancy is what drives my research.

Grants

As a member of the Louisiana Tech faculty, I have secured two grants thus far totaling \$23,911.93. The Just Business Giving Circle grant will enable my MGMT 474 students and our Louisiana Tech Supply Chain Club members to compete in a supply chain simulation game. This rigorous simulation will help entrench our supply chain concepts while giving our students the opportunity to compete against other university students and industry professionals. The KBR Wyle Services, LLC grant was awarded to me to conduct pandemic risk research for Air Force Material Command and the Air Force Institute of Technology.

2024 Just Business Giving Circle | Sustainable Supply Chain Simulation for Students | \$4,500
2023 KBR Wyle Services, LLC | AFIT/ENS Research on Logistician Risk During Pandemic | Grant # FA807518D0015 | \$19,411.93

Publications

Roberts, M.D., Douglas, M.A., Overstreet, R.E. (2024). Safety in context: Routines and the effect of a balanced safety and operations focus on worker perceptions and performance. *International Journal of Physical Distribution & Logistics Management*, Early Cite, <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJPDLM-08-2023-0293>.

Inman, R.A., Green, K.W., Roberts, M.D. (2024). A COVID replication and extension of firms' resilience to supply chain disruptions. *Supply Chain Management: An International Journal*, 29(2), 315-327.

Roberts, M. (2023). Influencing Air Force logisticians' information seeking during the COVID-19 pandemic: The role of organizational meetings in an expanded PRISM framework. *Journal of Defense Analytics and Logistics*, 7(1), 29-47.

Douglas, M.A., Swartz, S.M., Richey, R.G., Roberts, M. (2019). Risky business: Investigating influences on large truck drivers' safety attitudes and intentions. *Journal of Safety Research*, 70(1), 1-11.

Roberts, M., Douglas, M.A., Overstreet, R.E., Ogden, J.A., Schubert Kabban, C.M. (2018). Development and validation of a multi-level air freight handling safety climate scale. *Transportation research part F: Traffic psychology and behaviour*, 59(A), 445-462.

Swartz, S.M., Douglas, M.A., Roberts, M., Overstreet, R. E. (2017). Leavin' on my mind: Influence of safety climate on truck drivers' job attitudes and intentions to leave. *Transportation Journal*, 56(2), 184-209.

Roberts, M., Hazen, B. (2016). Big data for omni-channel supply chain management: The need for greater focus on people and process. *Automation and Logistics*, 2(4), 271-278.

Presentations

Evaluating air force logistician's risk information seeking during the COVID-19 Pandemic, Western Decision Sciences Institute, Portland, Oregon. (April 6, 2023).

University Service

I currently serve on the College of Business Undergraduate Policy and Assessment Committee (UPAC) where we focus on updating and approving the inner workings of the College of Business. A few of the areas we have been working on include developing an AI policy framework to help professors set guidelines for acceptable AI use for their courses, streamlining an Excel certification course for our students to help them gain valuable skills, and developing Bulldog Byte videos where important concepts from our foundational courses are further explained. These videos will be made available for our students to refer back to whenever they may need a refresher on the most important topics.

Community/Professional Service

In addition to being an ad-hoc reviewer for several supply chain-related peer reviewed journals, I am also an active member of the St. Frederick High School Warrior Foundation, a non-profit organization dedicated to supporting St. Frederick High School athletic programs. We concentrate on raising funds that enable new facility construction and existing facility upgrades and improvements.

Performance Evaluations

- Dr. Roberts is gaining early praises from undergraduate students as the new supply chain faculty member. He is concerned with student learning and has capitalized on tutoring from one of our doctoral students as a means for improving student success in MGMT 333. He has collaborated since his hiring with other supply chain faculty to bolster his research pipeline. Dr. Roberts is willing to involve himself in service activities and makes unrequested appearances at student events which showcases his passion for Louisiana Tech University and the College of Business.
- Dr. Roberts had excellent teaching evaluations in all courses taught over this past year. He developed appropriate content for his courses and his relevant professional experience surely provided him with real world examples that enhance course content and currency.