To Whom It May Concern:

It was my first day of college. A young and nervous freshman, I entered Hetzel’s Acting 1 class, not knowing what to expect. Completely overwhelmed by a campus of nearly 40,000 students, buildings galore, and more bus routes than I had fingers, I was greeted with serenity and ease at 2:00 PM that Wednesday afternoon. Hetzel, an Associate Professor of Acting and Voice, entreated our class to breathe. Perhaps a simple or trivial idea to some, this invitation meant the world to a group of impressionable and anxious students. In the midst of chaos and new beginnings, Hetzel provided tranquility and consistency.

Hetzel, who has been on faculty with UA’s Department of Theatre and Dance for a number of years, defies the idea that a professor’s work ends in the classroom; on the contrary, Hetzel’s work simply begins there. Teaching various courses to graduate and undergraduate students in Voice, Diction, Accents/Dialects, Careers, and Scene Study, Hetzel balances her broad and varied load with poise. Her office door, often open, provides a place to check-in, advise, and connect. Whether it be answering questions on what courses to take in the upcoming semester, meeting for additional help after class, or seeking vocal coaching sessions for creative activity on the UA Theatre and Dance stages, Hetzel is always available and excited to help.

Always ready to collaborate, Hetzel provided artistic aid even when I was not enrolled in one of her classes. During a production of *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, Hetzel provided voice and speech sessions in her office with me, in order to help prepare me to tackle the vocally draining show. Hetzel additionally offers her availability to graduating students participating in the New York City Senior Showcase. Again, despite perhaps not being an instructor to students that semester, Hetzel is nevertheless willing to carve out time to help students with their work.

Supportive and compassionate, Hetzel is also constructive and detailed. Throughout her Accents and Dialects course, students are asked to prepare monologues, songs, and/or scenes for the various accents studied throughout the course. Without a doubt, through the feedback on these projects and the work in class, I performed some of the most fruitful pieces of my collegiate career, discovering great nuance in my work with Hetzel. Her thorough approach to her vocation is rooted in the idea that one must do to learn. This pushes students to release their inhibitions and take chances,.

An active member of Arts and Autism, Hetzel gives back to her community weekly. Her work with this group for nearly a decade is inspiring, giving students an example of the power arts can have beyond the stage. Hetzel can often be found at student performances, supporting pupils outside the classroom when she holds no obligation to do so. Additionally, Hetzel is dedicated to continued education and professional development. As an Associate Teacher of Fitzmaurice Voicework and a Master Teacher of Archetypes for Actors, as well as a member of the Voice and Speech Trainers Association, Hetzel has continued her own personal education, enhancing the learning experience for her students. Hetzel is also featured in a number of articles, journals, and books as both an author and editor. Finally, Hetzel’s creative activity work has taken her to Chicago, Boulder, Scotland, England, and most recently, New York City, where she received rave reviews Off-Broadway in her original piece, “Step Mama Drama.”

It also comes to my attention that Hetzel will be putting her name forth for promotion to full Professor. There is no question of her dedication to students, teaching, research, creative activity, service, and The University of Alabama. Her dedication to these fields make her invaluable to the Department of Theatre and Dance and a worthy contender of the titular Professor. Her work on and off campus is selfless, always working for the betterment of the student and the community. This type of work ethic is not only rare, but also treasured and irreplaceable.

If there is one thing Hetzel provides all her students, it is a place to breathe. Upon graduation, Hetzel entreated a card to me. Enclosed was a tea bag—“breathe blend.” This simple reminder harkened back to my first day of class four years prior. This message and lesson will never leave me, and it is my sincere hope that future UA students are fortunate enough to encounter this lesson, too.

Sincerely,

Kyle Van Frank, Class of 2019

BA Theatre (Magna Cum Laude), Concentration in Musical Theatre