Quotes from Tim Hallet’s Letter:

**Perhaps one of the most impressive characteristics of Tim’s mentoring style is that he does not give up on students who, like me, sometimes fall behind in meeting deadlines and accomplishing goals. I recognize that I can be a difficult student to motivate, but Tim has never stopped trying, using numerous approaches to keep me on track, both when working on joint projects and in my own departmental progress.**

When the other members of my committee had given my dissertation proposal preliminary approval and suggested we could schedule a defense date, Tim questioned the strength and organization of my proposal, requesting a major rewrite before moving forward. At the time, these challenges were frustrating. Why, I wondered, is Tim holding me back when the other members of my committee will allow me to move forward? Now, having completed my data collection and nearing my dissertation defense date, I am grateful for Tim’s challenges, which strengthened my project at every stage. His challenges to my initial idea caused me to think through my plans more carefully and prepare for potential problems, while his request for a rewritten draft of my proposal forced me to think more carefully about the existing literature and where my project fit into it, strengthening the structure that would form the basis for my data collection. Even though he is not the chair of my dissertation committee, Tim’s feedback will be instrumental when attempting to publish my work.

**Tim Hallett is a professor who has helped me through the doubtful moments and is in no small part responsible for successes I have had. The time I have spent working with and receiving advice from Tim has helped me to progress through the program and has taught me not just about how to be a sociologist but also the kind of sociologist I want to be.** I am grateful for the mentorship that Tim has provided me over the past five years and for the opportunity to share with the committee why I think Tim Hallett should receive this year’s Outstanding Faculty Mentor Award.

Tim had heard from another professor that I was interested in ethnography, and he stated in his first email to me that he likes to take the opportunity whenever it presents itself to “work with graduate students and get graduate students published.” This project resulted in a co-authored paper that was published in the January, 2008 issue of the *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*.

It is difficult to picture my graduate school years without his advice and support and I am not sure that I would be approaching graduation with a job if he had not become a faculty member at IU. To me, the definition of an outstanding mentor is one that has had a substantial impact on student experiences while constantly recognizing that there is more than one path to success. Tim has often challenged me to improve, but he has never challenged me to be anything that was
not in line with what I wanted for myself. Near the end of my graduate career I can confidently state that Tim Hallett is, and has been, an outstanding mentor.

He has taught me to interact with the work of others in a way that is respectful to their contributions but simultaneously pushes beyond them. I have learned to soften critiques, to build rather than burn bridges in the course of scholarly debate, and to be more curious about how the social world operates and less defensive about how I think it may operate at any given moment. These are characteristics I did not acquire in the classroom but was able to learn while doing sociology with Tim as a mentor.

None of these experiences with Tim would be possible if he were not so accessible, available, and generous with his time. I have never emailed Tim without receiving a timely response. Despite having his tenure clock ticking almost the entire time I have known him and, thus, having his own pressing demands, Tim has always made time for me. Whether it is to read something I have written and provide feedback, discuss ideas related to a project or just ideas in general, or even discuss personal matters and my mental health as a graduate student, Tim has made himself available and has been quick to help in whatever way he can. He has provided me with invaluable advice and guidance on what I should be doing as a graduate student, forming committees, and navigating the politics of departmental life. At one point, when my attendance at seminars and colloquiums had become infrequent, Tim reached out to me and pulled me back in by reminding me of the importance of attending these events for both my professional development and identity within the department.

Tim was recently invited to write a chapter for an edited volume on the current state of ethnography. He quickly sent an email to Rashawn Ray and me asking us if we’d like to write this chapter, with him serving as third author in title but actually operating more as a reader. When inviting us to write this chapter, Tim again mentioned that he likes to take every opportunity he can to get graduate students published. The chapter will be about the relationship between theories of race and ethnographies about race. However, Tim doesn’t study race! He tailored the topic of this chapter to fit Rashawn’s and my interests and create an opportunity for us to get published based on those interests.

While I am grateful to Tim for helping me get publications, I have benefitted the most from his mentorship during the process that led up to those publications. Tim has taught me the steps required to take a research idea from conception all the way to publication. Tim’s mentorship has taught me all of the things I need to know to be a successful academic but never learned in coursework. In addition to teaching me the nuts and bolts of conducting research and publishing, Tim has acted as a model for the kind of academic I would like to be.
Tim has provided help with my teaching, and has been indispensable to my entrance into the publishing process: he has given me the opportunity to publish with him; provided me opportunities for collaborative projects, and even some funding to work on them; and has provided vital encouragement and feedback on my sole-authored papers and presentations. In short, Tim Hallett has played a vital role in my graduate career; my experiences are just one example of why he is a truly outstanding faculty mentor.

I have also managed to master my previous fear of presentation, again with Tim’s mentoring. In my first year, Tim encouraged me to present at the Chicago Ethnography Conference to gain presentation experience; he even let me run through my presentation with him beforehand to alleviate some of my anxiety. The first time I submitted to present at the ASA meetings, Tim’s guidance resulted in me presenting in a regular session instead of a roundtable. I know that my ability to confidently navigate this process on my own now is because of Tim’s guidance in years past.

For a beginning graduate student, the prospect of finding a faculty mentor can be daunting. While I made my way through the first-year haze the rest of the department apparently decided to hire a Northwestern graduate named Tim Hallett, to whom I was assigned as a graduate assistant for S100.

It is with great pleasure that I nominate Tim Hallett for this year’s Outstanding Faculty Mentor Award.