



October 1<sup>st</sup>, 2020

President Downs, Provost Wanous, and Members of the NSU Promotion and Tenure Committee:

It is my pleasure to write this letter in support of Dr. Kristi Brownfield's application for associate professor with tenure. I am beginning my eighth year at Northern State University, and my fourth in rank as associate professor of criminal justice. I have known Kristi since her arrival at NSU in the fall of 2015. As her faculty mentor and the colleague that has worked closest with her during this time, we have collaborated extensively on a wide variety of committees integral to our campus, faculty and staff searches, academic program modifications, and research projects. Considering this, I am more than qualified to speak on Kristi's candidacy for associate professor with tenure. In this letter, I will comment on Kristi's teaching, research, and her service to campus and her profession.

In reviewing Kristi's updated teaching dossier, it is apparent to me that she is not content in utilizing traditional methods of teaching. While she has extensive teaching experience when it comes to core sociology courses, she has also taught a varied cadre of topical courses in the field. Additionally, Kristi has engaged students with rigorous presentation requirements, research projects, and other methods of active learning while stressing critical thinking, the latter of which is necessary in preparing students relevant careers. Most importantly, Kristi is a dedicated teacher that does not shy away from innovation in the classroom. She is creative and takes risks, as she employs active learning techniques and has implemented a flipped classroom model in several of her courses with success. She can be trusted to provide students with not only the requisite content necessary, but also providing them with a learning experience that is complete with integrity. Students know what to expect from her in and out of the classroom, and she can be trusted to be timely in all tasks and complete them in a fashion that has allowed students to trust and respect her. Furthermore, her consistent approach to the classroom has fostered trustworthiness with many colleagues at NSU, as they consider her an innovative voice in teaching discussions.

In terms of research, Kristi has published empirical articles with colleagues at Northern as well as collaborators at other institutions, which highlights her dedication to the development of her fellow, immediate colleagues as well as her awareness of the importance of outside collaboration in the maintenance of empirical rigor as well as the development of her field. It is apparent that she has an active research agenda that builds on her published work. This scholarship has, at times, dovetailed closely with her pedagogy. My experience is that promotion review candidates can be broadly placed into two categories with respect to research: those with a past, present, and future of research promise, and those who are seriously deficient in one of those three temporal zones. In order to receive promotion in most institutions, a candidate should have a research capacity that they have achieved, have a current list of ongoing projects, and a probable pathway



to future research deliverables. In my estimation, Kristi's CV raises no red flags with respect to these metrics. She is a scholar who has been producing since before her arrival at NSU, and her pace of publication appears to be steady if not increasing, definitively ongoing, and likely to continue in the future. Collaboration is quite typical of a scholar in the field of sociology who is engaging in a research agenda that relies on time-consuming qualitative methodologies, and it is clear that she has served as a leader in various empirical tasks on her projects. Her research productivity and agenda raise no concerns for me as an academic under consideration for promotion to associate professor, and she will no doubt continue to be a meaningful contributor to research in her field as well as a mentor to junior colleagues engaging in research on our campus for a number of years to come.

While Kristi has clearly excelled in teaching and research, it is perhaps in service that she has set herself apart. Kristi has a tireless and enthusiastic commitment to service – and at that, many service tasks she embraces are the ones that many faculty actively avoid. She is in charge of assessment for the sociology program, engaged in campus-wide discussions on assessment, and has done quite a bit of work on some committees – such as the college internship committee as well as the college technology committee – which many faculty often shy away from devoting time to. She played an integral role in the task force that spearheaded the development and implementation of the Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETL) as well as an active role in several of the College of Arts and Sciences Strategic Doing activities.

Outside of NSU, Kristi has been active in service to both Midwest Sociological Society (MSS) and the Great Plains Sociological Association (GPSA). Kristi has been a fully engaged supporter of GPSA since her arrival on NSU's campus in 2015. She has volunteered for key positions within the organization, recognizing the need for GPSA to have an updated website as well as modern, accessible social media presence. What many do not realize is the small nature of GPSA, and the fact that it relies heavily on committed faculty volunteers such as Kristi. She is willing to take time out of her hectic campus schedule to attend to membership and develop great conference programs. Last academic year, Kristi served as the local coordinator for the conference, as it was held on our campus. Her tireless communication with GPSA members in this endeavor helped increase our number of proposal submissions – which was critically important in the development an effective conference program. Upon receiving the proposal submissions herself, I was impressed with her tenacity and enthusiasm in producing the final conference program. Her commitment to, and work for GPSA in this role resulted in a conference that was well attended by the core membership, with engaging panels. Kristi will continue to make a difference in keeping the organization moving forward, growing, and meeting the professional needs of the membership as she serves in the role of President-Elect next academic year. There is no doubt that Kristi's service involvements already match or exceed those of her senior colleagues at NSU.



Kristi is a solid academic who has established a pace of teaching development, research productivity, and service that presents clear evidence for promotion to associate professor with tenure, unreservedly. She embraces all that we value in our senior faculty as she has impressed me with her tenacity in all tasks, her passion and innovation about pedagogy, her attention to detail in service, as well as her dedication to her internal and external colleagues and our campus. I am confident she will continue to perform at a high level over the course of her career. Please do not hesitate to contact me at [c.waidlindberg@northern.edu](mailto:c.waidlindberg@northern.edu) if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

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