

October 5, 2020

Dear Provost Dr. Michael Wanous and Members of the Promotion and Tenure Committee,
Northern State University:

Dr. Kristi Brownfield, an assistant professor of sociology at Northern State University, is seeking promotion to associate professor with tenure. I enthusiastically endorse her application. As chair of Dr. Brownfield's department at NSU, it is incumbent on me to review periodically her teaching, research, and service records. In all of these areas, she exceeds university expectations. Professor Brownfield teaches a wide variety of introductory and upper-level courses at NSU, including, Introduction to Sociology; Popular Culture and Society; Human Sexuality; Socio-Cultural Theory; Social Deviance; Race and Ethnicity; Dystopian Societies; and the Sociology Capstone. In fact, she has taught thirteen separate courses since she arrived at NSU in the fall of 2015. She teaches many of these courses both face-to-face and online. I would hazard to guess that few other faculty members in the university teach a wider variety of courses than she does.

Student evaluations of Professor Brownfield's teaching have risen steadily in her time at NSU. She exceeds expectations in all major categories of assessment: overall rating of instructor, overall rating of course, amount of student learning, and on progress on objectives. This type of ascending arc in SOI scores is what we wish to see with instructors approaching tenure. Student comments attached to her SOIs are both numerous and positive. I have visited Dr. Brownfield's classes on several occasions; I can testify to the great care she takes in organizing and delivering her presentations to students; her classes, not incidentally, appear both challenging and relevant. She works assiduously to make her "flipped" classrooms an effective pedagogical tool. Group work is difficult to implement well, she does a very good job of creating classroom environments where group is very productive.

She regularly gives presentations at regional, and on occasion national, sociological conferences. She is especially active in the Great Plains Sociological Association (she is the President-elect of the Association) and serves as the book review editor of the Great Plains Sociologist. Professor Brownfield maintains an active research agenda. She has collaborated with faculty here, and elsewhere, in research projects that have resulted in three co-authored peer reviewed publications. Professor Brownfield has demonstrated that she is active both as a

researcher and in trying to publish the results of said research. She clearly exceeds the standards required at NSU.

Dr. Brownfield's record of service to the NSU community is superlative. Her attendance, and participation, at department, college, and university events is largely assured. She serves as the assessment officer for Sociology, and directs outreach and marketing efforts for that program. She serves on NSU's Diversity Action Committee, the Academic Technology Advisory Committee, the CAS Internship Committee, the Assessment Committee, and the Strategic Planning Teaching Pillar Team, along with other committees. She worked recently to thoroughly revise and update the Sociology Program Curriculum. She was recently (fall 2020) elected one of two CAS representatives to the University Academic Affairs Committee. Professor Brownfield has also assisted the other programs in our department in updating their assessment methods. She is one of the faculty members I can regularly count on to take on service related tasks in the department and to execute them well and in a timely fashion.

The winner of NSU's Outstanding Early Career Faculty Award (2020), Professor Kristi Brownfield's request for promotion, with tenure, to associate professor of sociology should be granted without hesitation.

Thank you for your consideration

Steven A. Usitalo
Chair, Department of History and Social Sciences
Northern State University