



ST. BONAVENTURE
UNIVERSITY

October 24, 2013

Dr. Michael Fischer
Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs

RE: Kimberly DeSimone
Applicant for Tenure and Promotion to Associate Professor

This letter serves as my strong recommendation for tenure and promotion of Kimberly DeSimone to Associate Professor in the School of Journalism and Mass Communication at St. Bonaventure University. Kimberly's extensive materials support her candidacy; this letter serves to expand on her credentials and offer my own insight having worked closely with Kimberly this past year as a faculty colleague and as dean.

Contributions within the School of Journalism and Mass Communication

Strategic Communication and Digital Media

Kimberly has been instrumental in developing a strategic curriculum map for the SCDM curriculum to ensure the students in this new major get the most from it. She is also instrumental in the development of the experiential learning component – the 12-credit Semester in the Agency course - to begin in Spring 2014. This course allows students to work in an advertising/public relations agency setting in producing campaigns for actual clients.

Kimberly has helped to develop the course so that students get the most from the experience. Also, her extensive contacts, particularly with women-owned, minority-owned and small businesses in the region will help to give our students necessary real-world experience while exposing them to diverse populations. In keeping with our Franciscan mission, I can think of no better way for the School of JMC to provide service to our community.

JMC curriculum redesign

The School of JMC has fallen woefully behind in any sort of curriculum updates. A consultant from our accrediting body, ACEJMC, stated that we have a current curriculum for the 1990s. Once I took over as interim dean, I was charged with redesigning and updating the JMC curriculum. We had already received approval for the new Strategic

Communication and Digital Media major and we had to take a serious look at our existing major in an effort to ensure that the new major would not destroy JMC.

Kimberly's knowledge of social and digital media has been instrumental in helping to design a 21st century curriculum that will create job-ready alumni. While her area of expertise is more in keeping with the SCDM major, the skills she teaches are necessary in Journalism and Mass Communication also.

To say that her digital presence and social media clout is an asset to SBU is an understatement. We would be hard pressed to find someone else who is able to show students and colleagues the importance of a strategic social media presence.

Extracurricular activities

Kimberly listens to and hears students. She also has the pulse on the digital media environment critical to the success of our students. Her most recent venture is to help to develop and then serve as adviser for a digital/social media club on campus. Several students have expressed an interest and she is helping them to make it a reality. This would represent a unique selling point for SBU compared with other schools in our primary marketing area in that no other school has a digital/social media club.

The club would challenge its members to strategically spotlight campus events, news and other happenings of interest to particular audiences.

Kimberly has also advised the American Advertising Federation student group as they prepare their advertising campaigns for national clients. I have worked with the group myself and recognize the incredible contribution Kimberly brings to the group. She challenges their ideas and forces them to analyze the primary and secondary research to defend their thoughts and proposed actions. She is incredibly supportive of the students, but also has incredibly high expectations because she recognizes the talent each of them possesses. Her forte is in helping them to prepare the client presentation. Her unwavering work helps the group to fine-tune their project each year. In fact, SBU competes with high profile universities with actual advertising programs or majors like Syracuse, Penn State, Ithaca, George Washington University, to name a few. We are regularly viewed as the group to "watch" in terms of presentation, we are that extraordinary.

Interdisciplinary Contributions

Kimberly is still in touch with her colleagues in the School of Business and teaches courses for them in the summer sessions. She has reached out to faculty, club advisers and sports coaches and has also been courted to offer her digital media expertise in helping to develop strategic social media outreach initiatives.

As a note, it has been observed that while Kimberly has been here since 2006, she was a lecturer and not in a tenure track position. She is a lecturer in the School of JMC with the agreement that she be moved to tenure track after one year. Because of her years of service, she was expected to apply for tenure and promotion after one year in the School of JMC. That said, Kimberly did not do a lecturer's job while in the School of Business. She

approached her job as if she was already on tenure track by providing extraordinary teaching, excellent advising, academic scholarship, professional leadership and service to the university and community. She was not required to publish, yet she recognized this as a need in her own academic life and for her own fulfillment.

Teaching in the RJJ School of Journalism and Mass Communication

Kimberly has been a member of the SBU campus community since 2006 beginning her career in the School of Business. She joined the School of JMC in 2012. The Moodle site contains her teaching evaluations in the School of JMC. Certainly, we may be able to secure teaching evaluations prior, but my understanding is that we need to have at least two consecutive semesters of teaching evaluations for her tenure packet. I have also attached my comments to her as part of the critiques I offer to all faculty. Those comments may be found in the *Dean's Documents* section of the Moodle site.

Additionally, Kimberly asked that Rene Garrison from the School of Education sit in on a class and offer her professional advice. That letter is included on the Moodle site (*Letter from Rene Garrison re: Teaching*). Rene sat in on a face-to-face undergraduate course. I sat in on one of our online graduate courses and offer the following critique.

- One of the criticisms of online learning is that students don't fully engage with the faculty member and don't fully understand and appreciate her personality. That is not the case with Kimberly. I was able to view her class notes, presentations, forum, questions and responses, and homework assignments. She responds to every forum post and offers compliments and criticism while also employing the Socratic method to challenge the students to think more creatively or more deeply about the given topic.
- Each class contained online learning resources, fitting given that most of her classes have a digital/social media component. She often uses TED Talks and other YouTube and internet resources to further explain a point or showcase a clear and concise explanation.
- The class was engaged and energized, and students participated. Granted, in an online course, all students are expected to participate, not just the few standouts who speak and contribute. Kimberly had a way of engaging the class such that each student seemed to want to give his or her best answer to the question posed.
- Kimberly did later admit that she was having a great deal of fun with this course. This particular course in the Strategic Leadership graduate program engaged her as well as the students. She said she was impressed by the fact that they she asked for X and they gave her X+50. She also said she hoped to be teaching at SBU when she's 72 years old because she loves the students and her colleagues enough to make that commitment.

It is certainly evident from the student evaluations posted on Moodle as well as the letters from former students that Kimberly is a highly effective teacher. In fact, I have found myself saying to students who might be considering a change of major from JMC or SCDM to another major that they should take a class with Kimberly. If they still want to change

majors after that, so be it. I have yet to have a student change majors. Her passion for her subject matter and for the craft of teaching, and her incredible knowledge are infectious to students. I would like to return to the classroom as a student if only to sit in on Kimberly's classes. Her evaluations routinely place her in the top tier of all professors at SBU. Her academic and professional activities are incredible; her teaching even more so.

Scholarly achievement and professional recognition for the School of Journalism and Mass Communication as outlined by ACEJMC

The following is taken from the School of JMC's guidelines for scholarly achievement related to tenure and promotion. The comments in italics are my comments related to Kimberly's scholarly activities. As a note, it is certainly neither required nor expected that any faculty member contribute to each activity. There may be a few that have not been tackled by a faculty member.

The RJJ School adheres to the guidelines of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (AEJMC) and the Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (ACEJMC) in determining criteria for scholarly achievement and professional recognition for faculty members.

In that regard, the school recognizes the importance of continuing professional achievement in communication and places much weight on professional activity, as defined below, to complement or be an alternative to scholarly research and publication. In evaluating such activity for tenure and promotion purposes, the school employs rigorous measures of professional accomplishment and influence.

As evidence, the school considers activities such as:

Meritorious analyses and critical reviews of professional subjects and/or articles published in peer-reviewed academic journals or professional publications. These could include, but are not limited to, reviews in scholarly journals, newspapers, magazines or the Internet. It is expected that material published in professional publications was accepted in said publications after review by professionals in the field the school considers peers of the faculty member.

Kimberly has published extensively on a variety of topics, many of which directly related to what she was teaching at the time. Her primary area of focus has been on women in the workforce. She has earned a national reputation for her social media work including Twitter, and her blog (PowerMom at WorkingMother.com). She is a featured writing for Working Mother Magazine and its associated Web site and blog. The magazine has a circulation of over two million people. Tens of thousands of women are regularly on the Web site. Many bloggers try to garner this sort of recognition. It is not easy to be selected as a preferred blogger by a national magazine with this sort of reach. The demographics of Working Mother correspond directly to Kimberly's work in this arena. All readers are working mothers, many of whom have at least a Bachelor's degree, are from 18 years old to over 50, and are employed at least part-time with 33 percent in managerial/administrative positions. Nearly half of readers are multicultural. That is an incredible reach for someone for whom this is her target

audience. Additionally, several accounts that regularly re-tweet Kimberly have more than 100,000 followers each.

Kimberly has certainly published in academic journals as noted in her CV and her Evidence of Scholarship piece. The journals noted also regularly contain journal articles by other colleagues at SBU.

Meritorious commentary on journalism or communication-related subjects, either published or on air, including guest appearances on radio or TV to discuss and comment upon issues within the expertise of the faculty member.

In considering commentary on journalism or communication-related subjects, the definition of such work may be considered broadly. It has been established that Kimberly has an online following on Working Mother's Web site. It should also be noted that her Twitter and LinkedIn connections show evidence of meritorious commentary. Consider that Kimberly's LinkedIn connections exceed 800 with connections including the president of the International Center for Research on Women, the Editorial Director at Working Mother, the CEO of Mom Central and Mom Central Consulting, and the Work/Life and Wellness Program Manager at the US Department of Agriculture, to name a few. Additionally, Kimberly is regularly re-tweeted based on her comments and expertise in the area of working women and women's issues and rights. As an example, Kimberly is regularly re-tweeted by Social Network Women (Forbes Top 20 Best-Branded Women on Twitter), Women Social Media (2013 Forbes Top 50 in Social Media), and Womenworking (just over 73,000 followers). Her work is seen by the social media directors at these sites and it then re-tweeted to the associated followers extending Kimberly's reach well beyond her own Twitter account.

Publications of textbooks or contributions to textbooks; publications in books or magazines of journalism or mass communication or books or magazines of wider professional scope, including peer-reviewed academic journals that help break new ground and successfully advance concepts, ideas and approaches that transcend ordinary instructional material.

Kimberly's work with Working Mother is an example of this. Additionally, her academic articles and presentations speak to this criterion, specifically, her presentation as part of the WNY Business Research Consortium and as part of the International Academy of Business Disciplines Annual Conference.

The conducting of seminars and workshops for professionals to enhance their professional skills and practice, and presentations at academic conferences to enhance the academic field.

Kimberly has worked with several faculty colleagues in helping them to enhance their strategic online presence and enhance their brand equity. Several letters of recommendation appear on the Moodle site under Letters of Recommendations – Professional Contacts. As noted in the criterion above, Kimberly has presented at several conferences in an effort to enhance the academic field in this area. She has also been an invited speaker at other local Universities and women's organizations like New York State Women in Business.

Meritorious work that keeps pace with the changing technology in the professions. As an example, blogging as a method of commentary and analysis on issues pertinent to the profession.

I have commented on Kimberly's work as it relates to this category.

Meritorious work in the professions during summer or sabbatical leave, providing the work enhances the faculty member's teaching.

Kimberly regularly teaches summer courses and is continually working on her own research and academic areas of interest. At present she is completing her dissertation. As a note related to this, Kimberly has had more of a hassle than most when it comes to completion of her dissertation. She has been through four different dissertation chairs in as many years and has been working diligently to complete her dissertation. Any of us can commiserate, but it should be noted that four chairs is extreme for any Ph.D. program. Her current dissertation adviser/chair has submitted a letter noting her progress. Please see it on the Moodle site Letter from Dr. Fortunato – Dissertation Chair.

In the summers, Kimberly regularly analyzes dozens if not hundreds of TedTalks and new social media platforms. Everyone knows Twitter and Facebook, but Kimberly is keeping a close eye on up and coming platforms like Ning, Thumb or Plaxo. The average digital platform has a life of 18 months or less. There are also few to no textbooks or publisher resources in the digital realm as they would be outdated the minute they are in press. Many of the readings Kimberly shares with students are not by traditional academics, but by top new social media experts.

As Creative Activity, **a category the accrediting body considers important**, the RJJ School recognizes writings and audio and video activities that illustrate a professor's skills in the field, albeit the subject matter does not deal directly with the field. As examples, a published review of a book not about journalism or mass communication, or a published or broadcast commentary not about journalism or mass communication.

Kimberly excels in this category. The field of journalism and mass communication is vast. A faculty member may have any number of interests in any number of fields. Certainly, a faculty member may do research specific to journalism and mass communication education, but it is just as critical that work be done to showcase talents in the professional arena. Prospective students are looking at our faculty and asking themselves if our faculty know how to work professionally. Are we able to teach the skills that will be of interest to employers upon graduation? That Kimberly is able to write extensively shows prospective and current students, as well as faculty colleagues, that writing each day is the hallmark of our profession. Finding something you have a passion for is critical. Alumni tell us that no matter what your interest, you may find an outlet for it in JMC in some capacity. Kimberly has done that with women's issues particularly as they relate to women in the workforce. Additionally, Kimberly's clout in the social/digital media sphere gives her an enormous amount of

credibility with her students and colleagues. She is sought after by folks on campus as well as local, regional, national and international professionals.

The RJJ School believes the above criteria address the uniqueness of a professional school in journalism and mass communication and fulfills the scholastic achievement criteria of St. Bonaventure University. Moreover, such professional achievement fortifies and enhances a faculty member's effectiveness in the classroom.

I strongly endorse Kimberly DeSimone for tenure and promotion to associate professor in the School of Journalism and Mass Communication. I believe the information contained in her materials as well as this supporting letter should satisfy St. Bonaventure University that the work Kimberly has done merits tenure and promotion to associate professor. Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact me.

Very truly yours.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Pauline Hoff". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

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