

## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Mark Kiyak, Chair, Department of Communication  
**FROM:** Tracy Marafiotte, Chair, Department of Communication Personnel Committee  
**DATE:** October 10, 2020  
**SUBJECT:** 7<sup>th</sup> Year Reappointment Recommendation: Dr. Angela McGowan-Kirsch

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A decision about tenure-track faculty members' seventh-year reappointment is significant as it represents the last opportunity to give that person influential feedback on their progress before they apply for continuing appointment and tenure. Consequently, the Department of Communication Personnel Committee is very pleased to unanimously "strongly recommend" the seventh-year reappointment (September 01, 2022, to August 31, 2023) for Dr. Angela McGowan-Kirsch, with no reservations. As in previous years, Dr. McGowan-Kirsch has continued to make valuable contributions to the teaching, scholarship, and service standards of the department and has strong agenda for continued success in these areas.

Dr. McGowan-Kirsch continues to be an integral part of the Communication Studies (CS) major. She has been essential to increasing the major's online presence, now offering two courses online: one a CS major core course (and Fredonia Foundations course), and both electives for several other majors. She has also helped other faculty shift to online learning. Most importantly, the quality of Dr. McGowan-Kirsch's online (as well as in-person) courses have received praise. Indeed, one of her reviewers—who has extensive education in and experience with online education—wrote glowingly of Dr. McGowan-Kirsch's "rigorous" and "creative" efforts: from her attention to detail in the course set-up to the extensive extras, such as course-specific tutorials, she created to construct a valuable student learning experience. This reviewer notes, "Dr. Kirsch-McGowan-Kirsch meets student where they are and provides them with numerous resources, including supplemental videos, handouts, and readings, to assist students in meeting each of her courses' competencies."

This same care and energy goes into her in-person courses, and these efforts have not gone unnoticed by the students. Dr. McGowan-Kirsch's course evaluations reflect that she is highly regarded, particularly in respect to her approachability, assignment grading turnaround, active learning, and her appeal to different learning styles. Further, students praised her ability to make difficult, dry theory (COMM 430, Communication Theory) relevant to contemporary culture.

During her 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> year review (2018), the DPC noted that we were "pleased with her ongoing progress" and "encourage[d] Dr. McGowan-Kirsch to continue this strong scholarly record." She has done just that. Since that review, she has had an article, "Advocating a preferred legislative style while constituting a bipartisan collective identity: Women senators' strategic use of constitutive and polarizing rhetoric," published, and has a second undergoing revisions for resubmission to the *Journal of Communication Pedagogy*, with a third under review with the respected journal, *Women and Language*. Each of these articles is squarely within her focus area of political communication, and contribute to her strong, ongoing research agenda. In fact, the DPC members each separately noted the significant ways in which Dr. McGowan-Kirsch has formed tight and mutually-beneficial links between her teaching, service and research. Further, she has two additional articles in progress related to her second area of service and teaching interest, online pedagogy (one of which is a collaborative effort with our colleague, Dr. Amanda Lohiser).

In her dossier, Dr. McGowan-Kirsch expresses her desire to be part of an elite group of scholars; clearly, she is not just working toward tenure but for longer-term goals. This is evidenced, for instance, by her communications with Kendall Hunt publishers regarding a political communication textbook. The DPC applauds her continued scholarly progress and goals for future work.

Somehow, in addition to her commendable pedagogical and scholarly efforts, Dr. McGowan-Kirsch places a heavy emphasis on service. As noted above, the DPC is particularly impressed with, as one committee member put it, “her integration of service with her academic specialties.” By way of example, her leadership of the campus American Democracy Project and advising of the student Fredonia Democracy Initiative dovetails neatly with her research in political communication (indeed, this sparked a submitted scholarly article), and each of these inform and are informed by her several courses in political, presidential, and leadership communication.

Specifically, Dr. McGowan-Kirsch’s extensive list of service includes not only eight departmental committees, work as our Internship Director, and faculty advisor for the ACA (Applied Communication Association), but an additional *thirteen* university/campus-wide committees such as American Democracy Project Leader, member of the Council on Online Learning, and, most recently, an important member of the Digital Instructional Support (DIS) Team, helping to create online learning modules for faculty transition to remote learning. In addition to all of this, she (with her peer, Dr. Amanda Lohiser), has worked tirelessly to conceptualize and coordinate the comprehensive construction of a Masters in Strategic Communication Program, which they will present to administrators this month.

In summary, the DPC commends Dr. McGowan-Kirsch on her accomplishments in all three areas of her work: her strong and continually-developing teaching skills, her robust research agenda, and her exemplary service to the department and university. We are pleased to have her as a colleague and believe that her work to-date positions her solidly as she looks toward her application for tenure and continuing appointment in the fall of 2021.

Tracy Marafiote, PhD, Associate Professor of Communication, DPC Chair

Elmer Ploetz, MA, Associate Professor of Communication

Roslin Smith, MFA, Associate Professor of Communication

Mike Igoe, JD, Associate Professor of Communication

cc: Angela McGowan-Kirsch