



**TO:** David A. Starrett, Executive Vice President and Provost for Academic Affairs

**FROM:** J. Andy Karafa, Dean, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences

**SUBJ:** Continuing Appointment Reappointment Recommendation of Dr. Angela McGowan-Kirsch, Assistant Professor, Communication effective September 1, 2023, and Promotion to Associate Professor effective September 1, 2022

**DATE:** December 15, 2021

Dr. Angela McGowan-Kirsch is in her seventh year of service as an assistant professor, with no prior service credit. I have reviewed the memorandum from the chairperson, Prof. Smith, the memorandum from the Departmental Personnel Committee (DPC), the individual ballots, and her dossier. I am pleased to note that Dr. McGowan-Kirsch has received unanimous, strong recommendations for a continuing appointment and promotion to associate professor; I wholeheartedly agree.

### **Teaching**

I do not think it is a stretch to say that Dr. McGowan-Kirsch has demonstrated a mastery of teaching throughout most (if not all) of her time here at Fredonia. Both student and peer perceptions of her instruction have been quite positive, *regardless of the modality employed.*

The scores found in university-administered, end-of-semester student reports have been uniformly high. Indeed, in almost every case, median and modal scores are at the top of the respective scales. Students offer a great deal of praise by way of open-ended comments. (This is also true of the forms she has created.) Peer observations are equally glowing. Although the number of positive statements is staggering, I discerned at least a few trends, which include the sense of community she creates, the speed and quality of feedback to students, and the level of challenge offered by her courses. One student notes that “[the] course was incredibly challenging . . . but [they] learned so much from it.” Another shares that “[t]he structure Dr. McGowan provides for this class is a breath of fresh air. It’s a lot of work, but it’s interesting and stimulating.”

Despite Dr. McGowan-Kirsch's early and continued success as a teacher, she still actively collects and responds to feedback, showing a desire to continually improve her craft. At the risk of being too repetitive with previous memoranda, I continue to be particularly impressed by the variety of ways that Dr. McGowan-Kirsch obtains and responds to student feedback. Sources of student feedback include classroom discussions, office hour visits, anonymous mid-semester forms, etc. A good example of her attention to student feedback is her modification of the slides utilized for Rhetoric & Criticism in order to incorporate "contemporary examples that break down complex topics." This was based on students sharing their struggles with the material.

Finally, Dr. McGowan-Kirsch shares a rather detailed statement describing her experience with and philosophy about academic advising. She approaches "helping students navigate their academic journey" holistically and "strive[s] to create a safe, challenging, and supporting learning environment." Further, she states that "students matter and when we meet I want them to feel heard, understood, and supported." Based on feedback she requested from her advisees, I am confident that she is achieving her goals. Her advisees are very fortunate, indeed!

In closing, I commend her for her many successes as a teacher and advisor!

### **Scholarship**

Dr. McGowan-Kirsch's research agenda has been productive and shows no sign of slowing. During this review period alone, she published one peer-reviewed article; she has one accepted pending revisions; she has two book chapters in press; and she has another manuscript under a second round of review. She has also continued to present her work at a variety of venues. The overall volume and quality of her work certainly meets the standard set for a continuing appointment!

Perhaps not surprising, given Dr. McGowan-Kirsch's obvious student focus, she has also mentored at least a dozen students in research projects since arriving at Fredonia. I am pleased that her plans include expanding on this and involving students in *her* research.

### **Service**

The chair of the DPC indicates that Dr. McGowan-Kirsch "is literally a paradigm of excellent service, with consistent and meaningful contributions to the department, university, discipline, and community." Her many efforts have included leading the development of the Strategic Communication curriculum, participating on the Digital Instruction Support team (DIS), chairing the American Democracy Project (ADP), serving as a peer reviewer, etc.

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In sum, it is challenging to capture everything Dr. McGowan-Kirsch has accomplished during her time at Fredonia. As noted by her chair, "Dr. McGowan-Kirsch is a highly respected, versatile colleague, with proven dedication to teaching, scholarly activity and service. Her attention to her students, helping them to succeed is admirable." I cannot agree more; I am pleased to add my strong recommendation for a continuing appointment and promotion to associate professor.

JAK:tmh

Attachments

C: Dr. Angela McGowan-Kirsch, Assistant Professor  
Ms. Roslin Smith, Chair  
Ms. Maria Carroll, Director of Human Resources