

January 6, 2026

Dear Dean Lillvis, Provost Gort, & President Arthur,

I am writing this letter to support Dr. Suzanne Nielsen's promotion to Full Professor. I will be focusing my letter and reflection of her work in terms of Criterion 5: Service to the University and Community as part of Appendix G: Guidelines for Evaluation in the IFO Master Agreement. Prof. Nielsen has a strong service record at Metro State University. Her service goes far beyond the usual level as she is a stalwart and exuberant supporter of colleagues and students on a day-to-day basis in her daily interactions. Her office door is open, and she is ready to take on whatever lies ahead with confidence that her colleagues greatly admire. She provides an upbeat atmosphere when she walks into a room which is a superb service to everyone in the working environment. I was her office neighbor for several years, and sometimes I would come to my office to find a sticker or small gift that she had left for me as a surprise.

Prof. Nielsen has a long record of service. She consistently serves on the same committees giving her a wealth of knowledge and experience that she shares with colleagues. She returns your email message in quick fashion, and has a no-nonsense approach that Metro State benefits from. She is able to adapt to new information and is not stuck in her outlook and has a capacious sense of intellectual life.

Dr. Nielsen chairs the committee that presents the Carothers Distinguished Writers Award. She has superior organization skills for the many tasks needed for the fair awarding process, from sending out the call for student writing, arranging the panel of judges, distributing the writing artifacts to the judges for consideration, and carefully moderating the award panel meeting. All of this is done within a short span of time and close consideration of detail.

She also serves as a long-term member of the Master of Liberal Studies Steering Committee. She gives her insights on decision-making and student applications. She also shares information about the program with prospective students. She has served as an MLS Capstone Reader, as well. She is able to help students consider all their options and potential in a way that reaches each student according to their individual needs.



Additionally, Dr. Nielsen actively participates as a member of the Liberal Arts Major (LAM) Committee. She provides advice to the LAM Program and to students in the Program, and is a staunch advocate for the LAM Program and its growth.

Along with training to be an Equity Champion and serving on the Shared Governance Committee and Academic Advising Leadership Committee, Dr. Nielsen also serves on the College of Liberal Arts Curriculum Committee. She can put new course proposers at ease with her friendly conversation in an environment that can be nerve-wracking at times, especially for early career faculty who may be proposing their first new course. She asks insightful questions and comes prepared for the Curriculum Committee meetings.

Dr. Nielsen also served multiple times on the hiring committee for the CLA Dean. This is time-consuming and takes much energy in the midst of many other commitments. She is active in the College of Liberal Arts in many other ways, as well, through participation at the IFO unit meetings; in the IFO Women's Caucus; in her Department of Writing, Literature, and Language; and in her program such as through monthly meetings with the Creative Writing Program. For the Creative Writing Program, she has done much coordinating. She has ushered several creative writing articulation agreements with 2-year colleges through the articulation process and has written program annual reflections. She recently made a change in joining a new Department structure and is instrumental in helping the Creative Writing Program flourish.

Dr. Nielsen also serves the larger creative writing community and neighboring community. She advises students working on *Haute Dish*, Metro's literary magazine, and organizes the readings of student work. She has spearheaded events and monthly poetry readings at the Mid-Town Global Market. She is a Flash Fiction judge for the American Voices Award sponsored by the Minnesota Writing Project and is a Scholastic Adjudication Judge for Flash Fiction. She presents at local high schools in creative writing seminars. Dr. Nielsen champions the fine arts and also is a member of the Minnesota Citizens for the Arts.

Dr. Nielsen has done and will continue to fulfill much service to the University, to the community, and to the profession. In my estimation, even at this time of budgetary and other pressures, we need to retain Professor Suzanne Nielsen in the College of Liberal Arts and honor her achievements in all the five criteria of Appendix G, as well as her future contributions, with a promotion to Full Professor.

Sincerely,

*Margaret Vaughan*

Margaret Vaughan, Ph.D.

Associate Professor, Ethnic Studies Program

Department of Ethnic, Gender, Historical, and Philosophical Studies