

Introductory Narrative

With this introductory narrative, I intend to highlight the key components I will focus on when addressing the five criteria for promotion from Associate Professor to Full Professor. When I think about criterion I, I firmly believe that a key component for effective teaching is building community, something I embrace at the beginning of each course, each semester. Writing is personal, and the idea of writers' workshops, where students share their work extensively for all present to evaluate can be intimidating and uncomfortable, thus working with a cohort model can ease and stimulate the re-vision process. Students need to trust their environment for a workshop process to be successful. This is why I cannot emphasize enough the importance of creating a safe environment for a community of learners within the classroom cohort.

In addition to having a safe environment, it is essential that students feel free to engage in ongoing dialogue with their instructors. To promote this at mid-semester of each class I schedule individual conferences with my students. I know that interaction with faculty is something students look forward to and come with a list of questions prepared in advance. In short, I am always aware of how important building community and student/faculty dialogue is for effective teaching. This contributes to my success as a faculty member in the College of Liberal Arts, hence this is of utmost importance when considering criterion I. Please refer to a letter I graciously received upon my request from Associate Professor, Jeremy Bandow, in support of my work in criterion I.

In response to criterion II, I please find within this dossier scholarly and creative achievements to include current writing projects, recent publications, and my work with Metro's literary magazine, *Haute Dish*, where I continue to serve as the faculty advisor, and work to build community among the editorial staff. I am honored to say that I received an award in April 2025 as Outstanding Faculty Advisor for *Haute Dish*. I am passionate about this publication, and I am so fortunate to work with all the students who volunteer their time to create a publication that truly represents Metro State voices.

Since my most recent book publication (*Face Up*) in 2021, I have worked extensively on a new collection of poetry which I started on my sabbatical in Spring of 2023, titled *70 Proof*. A few of these poems have been revised and recently published; others are awaiting publication responses.

In January 2025, I, along with 20 other students/alumni took on the challenge of repeating this feat so we write 70 poems in 70 days again. We followed this up with a reading on campus in April, '25.

Please see a letter from Dr. Belo Cipriani in support of my promotion, specifically related to criterion II.

As an educator, it is my mission to study and prepare for my courses each semester. I address how criterion III applies to my re-vision of required courses for the creative writing program. I am always searching for new texts and new methods of pedagogy, and I spend a great deal of time brainstorming ideas and strategies with other colleagues. I feel that I always need to be learning, right alongside my students. All of us crave those “ah ha” moments. Please refer to Dr. Julie Kae’s letter in support of my promotion, specifically related to criterion III.

Segueing into criterion IV, I want students to demonstrate growth and development while working toward their degree, so I encourage my students to embrace reading and research because this is what keeps the writing process active. This is where my role of advisor really plays an important role in student success. I think it is important to get to know my students beyond their writing talents, and I enjoy the process of sitting down with my students and looking strategically at their options when degree planning. Some students decide to take on a minor, or double major, and I like seeing how hopeful they feel as we piece the puzzle together by exploring options. In addition, the advising assistance that the university provides CLA is extremely helpful for me and my students. There are times when I forget the process or procedure of something, but the professional advisors are always there to assist. I value my interactions with academic advisors across the university. Please recognize Professor Michelle Filkins’ letter in support of my promotion, specifically focusing on criterion IV.

As a move into a brief overview of criterion V, I want to start off by saying Metro State gave me hope when hope was hard to find. As my husband says, “You can take the girl out of the east side, but you can never take the east side out of the girl.” So here I am, applying for promotion to full professor. This is my last move within my career track.

It has been my honor to serve as a full-time associate professor in the College of Liberal Arts over the last several years. Please find Dr. Maragret Vaughan’s letter in support of my promotion, specifically related to criterion V. Thank you for the opportunity to offer you this dossier representing the five criteria for promotion

Oh, and by the way, I want to give a sincere thank you to my students, and my colleagues for all their kindness, support, and humor throughout this process. A special thank you in a bow-down-and-kiss-your-feet sorta way to Diane DeRosier for creating this web site and making me appear more professional than I really have ever felt in my life. Gracious applause.

Suzanne Nielsen