



August 16, 2022

From: Karen Cukrowski, Associate Professor of English  
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Re: Letter of Recommendation for Trey Shirley

To whom it may concern:

Short version: I am excited to recommend Trey Shirley for Promotion

Long version:

My brother Kenneth LeCroy is a family practice medical doctor in Colleyville, Texas. His options were myriad, but most of his instructors recommended he practice surgery. He preferred (and still prefers) the wide range of interesting diagnoses and people he sees as an all-around doctor. He can sew, do woodwork, cook, sing-dance-and-act, write, and THINK--and he is constantly receiving awards for his bedside manner and breadth of knowledge. (I believe Trey's own wife, Dr. Trish Shirley, is similarly interested in the wide array of illnesses and situations she encounters in her medical practice as well.)

Dr. Trey Shirley (henceforth Trey) is the first professor I have ever recommended who reminds me so strongly of my own brother. Trey is oh-so-smart and he of course is an exemplary teacher in his own classes--but he is also interested in a broad range of subjects and topics. Most of my examples come from the courses I also teach (Cornerstone; or taught, in the case of the now-tragically-defunct Core 210 course). Trey's knowledge and teaching abilities come from the very fact that he is so well-rounded; he is well-read—and in a number of areas, from art of course to philosophy to Bible to literature and more; he can thoughtfully engage in discussions about film and teaching theory, as well as church doctrine and romanticism.

Outstanding teacher: Here is but one small example of a single lesson that Trey teaches that would I think blow you away if you were lucky enough to hear it: when Trey teaches his Cornerstone students about the Prodigal Son, he addresses some of the failures our short-sighted social location may cause—and thus some of the reasons we must learn to see things from multiple perspectives (a main focus in the Cornerstone course). When Trey asks his students,



“Why was the Prodigal Son in need?” the most common answer by far (in our ACU demographic) is that the young man squandered his money on partying; however, Trey addresses what students fail to see, *even after* first telling the story and then reading the Luke 15 scriptures themselves: “there was a famine in the land” and “nobody gave him anything to eat” are just as present as “our” usual answer. He then addresses why such a phenomenon occurs. This lesson is brilliant, and it is only one of *many* that Trey masterfully teaches.

Cornerstone director: I have taught Cornerstone since its inception. Trey’s leadership in this course accounts for a huge part of why I believe ACU is considered a leader in the First-Year experience. He has taken a course that was not very good (my own daughter Katie did not appreciate her Cornerstone experience) to one that is successful, important, and, for the most part, similarly excellent across all 30-or-so sections. Trey instructs us Cornerstone teaches; he promptly provides many, many useful materials; and he models excellence through his stellar Spotlight lecture to 100% of our freshmen. (I am sad that he is leaving the Cornerstone leadership, but I am excited to see what he will provide in the Honors college position he is taking. He will fill Tracy Shilcutt’s shoes well, and that’s saying a lot!)

Trey is the kind of professor ACU profits from hiring, encouraging, and promoting: smart, fun, interesting. He likes to discuss topics of all types; yes, there’s a lot of art history, but, as mentioned before, there’s also theology and the news and what to eat that he has never had before. His conversations contain depth: the thinking behind an opinion, and the implications that such a position could or would mean if such-and-such were implemented. (Oh, and he is a super father, so he just might be perfect.)

Finally, one of my best friends, a biochemist who has known Trey and his wife for many years, adores Trey and recommends him for promotion. Even though I am not in an Art field, I give Trey Shirley my strongest recommendation. I would love for him to teach my grandchildren one day; I am glad that I myself continue to improve from his leadership.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions at all.

Sincerely,

Karen Cukrowski