

Abilene Christian University
Department of Art and Design
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Abilene, Texas 79699



August 22, 2022

Dear Tenure and Promotion Committee,

It is truly an honor to write this letter in support of Trey's tenure and promotion portfolio. From this document, I am sure you will attest to Trey's remarkable skill as an educator, administrator, and scholar.

I will begin with one of my favorite characteristics, particularly from my perspective as department chair for the past twelve years. We all know that moment in a meeting when a task has materialized and the leader of the meeting is about to ask for volunteers. While most are trying to avoid eye contact Trey, on repeated occasions, would raise his hand and say he had already created a Google doc and the task was almost complete.

This action exemplifies a few key characteristics of how Trey moves in the world. The first is a posture of participation. Trey is not one to sit on the sidelines and let others do the heavy lifting. Trey will roll up his sleeves and get to work. He works for the good of the community. He doesn't just say yes to his own interests but to those things he knows benefit the community he is a part of. Trey's behavior also illustrates his remarkable speed and efficiency in getting work completed. I have found higher ed to be particularly lenient on projects that go on and on or never quite reach the finish line. Trey has never suffered from this tendency. He gets things done with speed, excellence, and a positive attitude.

Another aspect I have considered significant when weighing tenure and promotion is fit. Fit can be a difficult thing to define but in this case, I think it is a beautiful example of when the fit is particularly good. Trey's ability to work with people from all corners of campus with efficiency and grace is a strong testament to fit. I would argue that only a few on campus have the temperament, social skills, and intellectual dexterity to run a program as important and central to the success of our university as Cornerstone. This is the course that every incoming freshman experiences upon arriving and no other course require such cross-disciplinary coordination and alignment. It has great potential to be a disaster but the results under Trey's leadership have been spectacular.

I would argue Trey's work with Cornerstone weighs heavily in ACU's ranking as 7th in the nation for best "First-Year Experience" in U.S. News & World Report 2022. I am reminded of the criteria for promotion to full professor, specifically the item related to scholarship which requires "influence beyond the ACU campus". I understand Trey is not applying for full professor but I see his work with Cornerstone as a great example of performing at such a high level that it has 'influence beyond the ACU campus.'

I would also like to address Trey's scholarship. Trey did a beautiful job articulating the nature of scholarship in a creative field and clarifying the significance of his work. I want to emphasize and confirm

that his rationale and arguments are, in my view, highly accurate. They are not overblown or exaggerated but clearly articulated and simply correct. I would like to highlight specifically his web design work for ACU. If there is any temptation for the committee to reduce the weight of that work within his portfolio because of familiarity with ACU I would argue strongly against it. In an effort to avoid that bias I might suggest ascribing his work to whatever out-of-state university you believe is comparable in stature to our institution. I bring up this work specifically, in part, because it is a massive undertaking and should weigh heavily in his favor. He has used his professional and creative skills for the betterment of many departments within this university and assuring the quality is in line with the national stature of this university. The institution is lucky to have this resource so close.

Lastly, Trey is a gifted, well-respected, and compassionate teacher with remarkable collaborative skills. I had the privilege of co-teaching a course with Trey. I believe co-teaching can be difficult under the best circumstances. It requires organization, professionalism, and a collaborative nature that can be challenging to maintain for an entire 16-week semester. I was blown away at Trey's capacity to juggle the demands of co-teaching and build strong, productive relationships with students that served to enhance learning.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mike Wiggins", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Mike Wiggins

Professor in the Department of Art and Design

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