



Dear Tenure and Promotion Committee,

I am writing this letter in support of Dr. Trey Shirley for his application for tenure and promotion to Associate Professor. In this letter, I would like to highlight a few of his contributions.

Recently, I selected Dr. Shirley to serve as the Associate Dean of the Honors College following the retirement of Dr. Tracy Shilcutt. Dr. Shirley came on board in a consulting role in fall 2022 and then joined the College officially as our Associate Dean in December 2022. In this short time, he has made a significant impact on the direction of the College.

Trey was our selection to this post because of his strong track record leading Cornerstone, his leadership as Department Chair, and his innovative teaching and purposeful mentoring of students. In addition, he is a solid interdisciplinary scholar who is able to connect with a broad swath of our students. He is strong at both more traditional research-based methods as well as a scholar in the fine arts. He is excellent in the classroom and as well as working with students individually. He was an easy choice to fill the role of associate dean.

One of the first things that Dr. Shirley helped with in the Honors College is our new strategic plan. This document will guide the College over the next five years. The plan focuses on six initiatives that elevate the College as we seek to provide an elite Christian academic experience. Trey not only worked with me to provide relevant and impactful content and material for the plan, he then used his design skills to create a beautifully designed document that we have been able to share with multiple constituencies, including ACU's Board of Trustees.

Dr. Shirley also began to work on an initiative to help make the college more distinctive. In fall 2023 we are introducing new tracks to our incoming class. The crux of this innovative program allows students to choose a track of study after completing their first semester in Honors. There are four tracks from which a student may choose: Design Thinking and Innovation, Social and Environmental Justice, Global Service and Leadership, and Research. Regardless of a student's major, they will select an Honors track that will allow them to customize their individual academic experience while in the College. We are excited about this new offering, as we know of no other Honors College in the nation offering a track-based academic experience.

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Finally, I asked Dr. Shirley to help lead our initiative to establish our first Living-Learning Community in the newly built Wessel Hall. Trey has worked closely with several campus partners to get us ready for our inaugural cohort. He has contributed to the development of all aspects of this new endeavor. We are thrilled to offer 160 incoming Honors students this integrated living and learning experience with faculty walking alongside them in Wessel hall as faculty in residence. Dr. Shirley has helped to make sure this will be a robust experience for our Honors students.

The Honors College is grateful for the contribution of Dr. Trey Shirley. His presence has made a significant, positive impact on the Honors College in a very short time. I am thrilled to think about the long-term impact he will have on the College. Thank you for considering his application for tenure and promotion.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J. Morris', written over a light blue horizontal line.

Dr. Jason Morris  
Dean, ACU Honors College