



August 13, 2016

Dr. Jennifer Huddleston has asked me to write in support of her application for promotion and tenure. As a faculty member who has passed through this experience only two years prior to this application, I think that I am well-positioned to comment on the contributions and progress that Jennifer has brought to the Department of Biology.

Sometimes it seems like questions of tenure and promotion focus on whether a faculty member has made sufficient improvements to be considered of equal status to others in the academic community. While Jennifer's work has clearly improved, especially in the area of teaching, which depends so much on experience, I cannot state strongly enough that Jennifer has made our department stronger from the moment that she arrived. Therefore, I intend to use this letter to honor and illuminate talents and virtues that she brings to our department beyond what we could have achieved without her.

To begin, Jennifer's work ethic stands out among the faculty. If anything negative could be said, perhaps I could argue that she works too hard. But setting aside this concern, I want to express my appreciation for the investments that she has made in our community. She has maintained an outstanding teaching, research, and service workload and has probably taken less than her fair share of reduction opportunities, especially during maternity leave and while maintaining commitments to the welfare of her own family.

Jennifer has brought new and essential expertise to our community. Her work as a microbial geneticist has reinvigorated and advanced microbiology education at ACU and helped create a more rigorous and well-rounded biology research program. She has increased community cohesion through collaborative research publications involving other ACU faculty and students, and she is one of the outstanding mentors for undergraduate research at ACU. Her research is also perceived as significant outside of our program and has resulted in multiple student awards at both the local ACU Undergraduate Research Festival and the Alpha Chi National Convention.

Jennifer is simultaneously intelligent and humble. The importance of this combination of traits is not acknowledged often enough, but the damage done without it is everywhere to be seen within ACU and other academic communities. Jennifer is smart enough to help

me improve in areas in which I need help, but she is considerate enough to help build the rest of us up socially and not just intellectually in the ways that she contributes. Jennifer is introspective. She recognizes that she has weaknesses and that she might not perceive those weaknesses in the same way that others see her, so she communicates openly about them. She helps us learn from each other. I always get the impression that a conversation with Jennifer is going to result in some form of progress, probably for both of us.

In summary, I think that the Biology Department has been very fortunate to have found this combination of qualities in one of our newest professors. I ask myself: Would we be weaker without her? Yes, there is no doubt that she would be sorely missed. Could we replace her? Only in the most fortunate of circumstances would I expect to be able to find this combination of traits in a new faculty hire or tenured faculty member. Therefore, I strongly recommend Jennifer for both promotion and the awarding of tenure. She is an ideal fit for ACU as we try to both grow and remain cohesive at the same time. I hope that she stays at ACU for her entire academic career.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Josh Brokaw". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Joshua M. Brokaw
Associate Professor of Biology