

# ABILENE CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY

*Educating Students for Christian Service and Leadership Throughout the World*

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May 29, 2012

John Ehrke, Ph.D.  
Department of Mathematics  
Abilene Christian University

Dear John:

The tenured faculty of the Department of Mathematics has reviewed your pre-tenure portfolio. In our meeting with you on September 23, 2010, we discussed some suggestions, and this letter contains a more complete summary of those suggestions.

First, we all agreed that you are making excellent progress toward your goal of tenure and promotion to Associate Professor. Some specific comments I received were

“I think John is right on track to being ready for tenure in 3 more years. He works very hard to do a great job in his classes, and works hard to maintain great scholarship. He is collegial and works to help me with my technology issues, but is open to getting ideas from us as faculty.”

“He is certainly an excellent hire for our department.”

“I find that he is on track for tenure and promotion.”

You are an effective teacher, as demonstrated by the comments from your students from a variety of classes and by the examples of student projects. Your continued development of your dissertation research and your exploration of the use of mobile technology in the classroom demonstrate your commitment to scholarship. You have provided service to the University through your committee work, to the Department of Mathematics by your evaluation of course competencies, to your church through teaching and to the mathematics profession. Evidence of your collegiality extends beyond our department and college. One example is your work with students and faculty in the Department of Physics to tailor the differential equations course sequence to benefit their majors as well as ours. Another is the inclusion of representatives from the Adams Center in your discussions with Texas Instruments regarding mobile learning research. We applaud your efforts to collaborate and cooperate with your colleagues.

In looking over your portfolio, the documentation of the outstanding work you have done, several had some suggestions on the presentation of that work. The overall feeling was that there was actually too much detail given. A broader description and reflection of the growth you have experienced as a teacher will benefit the committee more than, for instance, repeated examples of syllabi from the same class over several years. The committee needs to hear from you how you have grown, not wade through multiple syllabi. Here are some specific comments from various members of the mathematics faculty.

1. Select one or two classes (perhaps MATW 120 and MATH 351) to demonstrate your growth as a teacher. Give the latest example of a syllabus from your classes, but then describe how your approach has changed.
2. In the Teaching section, you start out with an introduction giving an analogy to conducting an orchestra, then you switch in the next section to a cooking/ingredients analogy – pick one.
3. Leave out the listing of the criteria from the ACU Tenure and Promotion document and the departmental criteria. The T&P committee does not need these stated, and the department will state our findings in a letter. It came across as a checklist, which made it more like a legal document and contributed to the length.
4. Move the evaluations to the end as part of the documentation. I think you should write 2-3 pages of reflection in each area: teaching, scholarship, service and collegiality (maybe just 1 page here). You can observe where you started and where you are now and write these pages from a growth perspective. Then use the evaluations to document what you say in the reflections.
5. Student work seems to be about right in number and in scope.
6. Solicit some more letters from former students. This should be easier by the time the actual document is due.

We realize that many of these comments have to do with the organization of the portfolio, which is a matter of personal taste and opinion. But we all found it to be too much criteria, check this and that off, and less summary of where you started, where you are, and where you want to go. Give evidence of your growth by your reflections and put selected documentation of said growth in the appendices. The committee can refer to that evidence if they need to, but the primary thrust of the portfolio is you making the case for your growth in the areas of teaching, scholarship and service.

Sincerely,



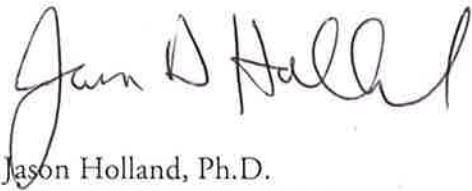
Mark W. Riggs, Ph.D.  
Chair, Department of Mathematics



Phyllis Bolin, Ph.D.  
Associate Professor of Mathematic



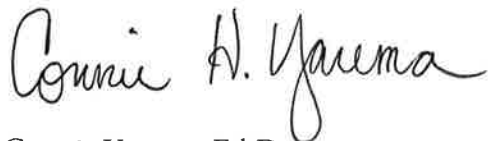
David Hendricks, Ph.D.  
Associate Professor of Mathematics



Jason Holland, Ph.D.  
Associate Professor of Mathematics



Alexander Karabegov, Ph.D.  
Professor of Mathematics



Connie Yarema, Ed.D.  
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