



August 15, 2015

ACU Tenure and Promotion Committee Members,

I am excited to write this letter in support of Kelly Elliott's application for tenure and promotion. Kelly and I first met at New Faculty Orientation five years ago, and although we didn't work together during our first year on campus, I could not be more thankful for the personal and professional relationship we have developed over the past four years. Kelly is an amazing educator and scholar who is, in my opinion, extremely deserving of both tenure and promotion.

In the spring of 2011, during my first academic year at ACU, I taught CORE 210 (then 120) with two co-teachers in a very large section of over one hundred students. It was one of the most challenging assignments I've had during my five years at ACU. And when summer break began, Dr. Greg Straughn, then the director of general education, approached me to see if I'd be willing to teach the course again in the coming fall semester with a smaller section. I vividly remember telling him that my willingness to try the class again was entirely dependent on who my co-teacher would be. When he suggested Kelly, I said yes without hesitation. It was one of the best professional decisions I've made as a faculty member.

Working with Kelly has both challenged and enriched my work as a faculty member and scholar. Kelly takes teaching very seriously, preparing thoroughly for each and every class she teaches. It doesn't matter if we are teaching a new lesson or returning to material we've taught for years, she always puts renewed thought and work into updating the content of her lectures, consistently seeking new ways to relate course material to students. She is also eager and willing to find guest speakers who can bring interesting and relevant areas of expertise to share with our students.

I have also seen Kelly grow as an instructor over the past four years. At the beginning of our partnership, she virtually always used a lecture format when delivering material in class. But as time has passed, Kelly has become much more comfortable with other activities, including small group discussions, application/simulation activities, and technological components such as video clips and in-class polling. Because (as she would tell you) dealing with technology isn't Kelly's greatest strength, she has spent significant time learning about new programs and ways to seamlessly integrate them into her classes.

On a personal note, my own work in the classroom has benefitted from watching Kelly interact with students. She knows her students individually and cares about them. We get quite a few students in our CORE 210 section because they had her in another class. It's clear that they chose this section because of her. However, she doesn't form these connections with students by giving them simple assignments or being an easy grader. Quite the opposite. Kelly consistently challenges her students in the classroom. She regularly connects issues of faith and social justice

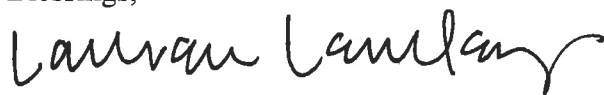
to course material in ways that cause students to consider their decisions and the values they want to hold in life. The discussions she fosters in the classroom are about issues that truly matter to her students.

In addition to this excellence in the classroom, Kelly is also a committed and successful scholar. As we have worked together over the past four years, I've been able to hear about the many trips she has made to present at conferences and the progress she has made on the book project related to her dissertation work that has now received a revise and resubmit. Though I'm not trained as a historian, the presentations she has made for students in our classes of just pieces of her work easily display her passion and depth of knowledge.

Professionally, working with Kelly is a blessing and most certainly not a burden. Though from the outside it might seem like team teaching enables an instructor to do only half as much work as they would when teaching a class on their own, co-teaching even one class quickly changes that perception. Kelly and I don't have exactly the same teaching style or preferences for how we grade or the assignments we write. But we have always approached that contrast as an asset for our students, a way for them to learn from more than one perspective. When we discuss how an activity will work or what decision we should make about how to structure an assignment, Kelly is flexible, adaptable, open to trying new ideas, and always willing to take on (at least) her half of the work. We often joke about how each of us feels that the other is "doing all the work" at most points in the semester, but in the end I know that I only get that feeling because of Kelly's commitment to our course and our students. She has never missed a meeting or failed to complete something she agreed to do for class. I always know, without a doubt, that Kelly will support my conversations with students and the decisions we make together. She is an excellent collaborator and truly an asset to the university.

I am confident that Kelly's students are better people for having known her, because I know I am. I enthusiastically support her application for tenure and promotion. Please let me know if I can answer any questions or provide an additional information.

Blessings,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Lauren Lemley". The script is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Lauren" and last name "Lemley" clearly distinguishable.

Lauren Lemley, PhD
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