

9-4-2015

Committee on Promotions and Tenure
College of Business Administration
Abilene Christian University
Abilene, Texas 796-99-9317

It is my understanding that Dr. Orneita Burton has applied for and is under consideration for promotion to full Professor. As a significant academic colleague of Dr. Burton with extensive experience of her work and qualifications, I wish to supply my comments for your consideration.

Dr. Burton some four years ago generously agreed to be considered and was elected for the most burdensome role, involving five years of service work, for the Management, Spirituality and Religion (MSR) section of the academy of Management. MSR is one of some 24 divisions of the Academy of Management (AOM), the primary professional organization in the U.S. and internationally for management faculty with some 20,000 members. I myself initiated the first professional activity in this field at AOM in 1997, which led eventually to our formal structure and acceptance of this new field at AOM and a professional academic journal, the Journal of Management, Spirituality and Religion and a current membership in the group of 656. MSR had been having some difficulties with effective and committed leadership at the time that Orneita volunteered.

Due in large part to Dr. Burton's vigorous, committed and diplomatic leadership of the group we have largely recovered from a prior membership decline and have begun to achieve stronger recognition for our field of study, research and teaching both within AOM and outside. Orneita has consistently participated in our academic work, successfully reinvigorated our Dissertation Workshops for doctoral students in our field, our MSR Newsletter and our selection and awards program for dissertation proposals in the fields of management and spirituality or religion. One result of this is that I, as a semi-retired professor of management felt the confidence in MSR and Orneita's leadership to begin, 3 years ago, making a substantial annual contribution for the MSR dissertation awards and Dr. Robert Ouimet, a leading Canadian industrialist and head and founder of the major Canadian foundation < http://www.notreprojet.org/OurProject_detailed.pdf > for our field, has also resumed his contributions, largely due to Orneita's work with him, to MSR.

On a personal level I have consistently found her own work in our field exemplary and her leadership consistently effective even with academics that, as you may recognize, can be difficult to bring to agreement and commitment. Our newsletter has been reinvigorated; our academic papers and research have expanded and our annual Management and Spirituality Retreats, which Orneita has attended, have grown. From working with her and having heard her speak, I am confident that she is equally effective with your students and strongly believe that promotion to full Professor would be appropriate and beneficial for your institution. You have a gem on your faculty, and I trust that you will recognize her contributions.

Sincerely,
Professor Emeritus Lee Robbins, Academy of Management; Golden Gate University
LeeRobbins@post.Harvard.edu
415-713-1341