

ABILENE CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY

Educating Students for Christian Service and Leadership Throughout the World

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July 28, 2021

ACU Tenure and Promotion Committee:

I am writing this letter of recommendation on behalf of Dr. Sarah Easter who is applying for tenure and promotion to associate professor here at ACU. I first heard about Dr. Easter from Dr. Ryan Jessup who told me that the College of Business had hired a qualitative researcher. Dr. Easter and I met soon after she arrived at ACU when she attended one of our Qualitative Research Lunches in the Adams Center. Dr. Easter would later present at one of our Qualitative Research Lunches.

It was not, however, until this past year that I had the opportunity to work closely with her. Last summer Dr. Easter and I were contacted by Derran Reese and Dr. Laura Carroll and asked to provide a research workshop for the Best Practices in Christian Higher Education: A Cohort-Based Research Seminar Series. ACU, in partnership with the Council for Christian Colleges and Universities, is hosting a series of two-year, cohort-based research seminars, examining high-impact practices related to the student success areas ranked by the *U.S. News & World Report*. This first cohort focused on the student success area of first year experiences. Sarah and I conducted a two-day overview of qualitative research methods in February 2021 and then hosted a three-day workshop in May 2021 where we provided additional information about qualitative data collection and analysis and provided one-on-one consulting on the participants' research proposals.

Dr. Easter was a pleasure to work with on this seminar. Her expertise in qualitative research is impressive, as is her ability to explain research concepts to others. She is very organized and puts extensive planning into her presentations. She considered the needs of our audience and their levels of expertise and successfully adapted the information we provided so that it was accessible and appropriate for diverse learners. She was also always open to ideas and suggestions, both from me and our participants, and she continued to make adjustments based on the ongoing feedback she received.

Although I have not had the opportunity to see Dr. Easter teach college students, I am quite confident that she is an effective teacher. As we planned and implemented our seminar, she shared her philosophy of teaching and expressed the importance of active learning, keeping lecture to a minimum. This approach allowed our participants to actively process the information we presented and acknowledged the shared expertise among the participants. She indicated that she uses a similar approach in the college courses she teaches to help her students master and remember course content.

Through our time together, Dr. Easter demonstrated collegiality, not only through her interactions with others but also by recognizing others' expertise. As we planned the seminar, Dr. Easter came up with the idea of inviting a panel of ACU researchers who have studied first

year experiences to interview in our seminar. She identified several folks across campus who would be a good fit for the panel and took the lead on contacting them and designing questions for discussion. As our planning continued, Dr. Easter and I realized that several of the participants would have an interest in quantitative or mixed methods research designs. Knowing that our expertise was primarily qualitative, Sarah suggested that we invite a quantitative researcher and helped contact Dr. Kay Jang and Dr. Suzie Macaluso who both participated in the seminar as well.

Dr. Sarah Easter has been a wonderful contribution to the ACU faculty, and I highly recommend her for tenure and promotion to associate professor. I look forward to additional opportunities to collaborate with her in the future.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Andrew Huddleston".

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