



DREXEL UNIVERSITY

Department of

Criminology and Justice Studies

College of Arts and Sciences

Robert J. Kane, Ph.D.
Professor and Department Head

March 28, 2018

Dear Donna,

Attached, please find one PDF document that includes both the CJS Departmental report on Cyndi Rickards' promotion to Associate Teaching Professor, and my Department Head letter of support. You will note that both documents are dated April 2016.

If you recall, Cyndi and I thought she was eligible for promotion in 2016. At that time, I commissioned a local committee (consisting of Rob D'Ovidio, Doug Porpora, and Simone Schlichting-Artur) to evaluate Cyndi's teaching and service activities as they related to promotion, and I asked them to submit a report to me. Based partly on that report and partly on my own experiences with Cyndi, I then wrote my own letter that strongly recommended her for promotion. Upon my submission, however, you notified Cyndi and me that she had not yet completed the requisite time in service required for promotion. You also communicated to her, Rob D'Ovidio, and me that because her case for promotion was so strong, she wouldn't need to submit any new materials for her promotion candidacy, which occurs this year. Thus – and as noted – I am submitting the original committee report and my letter as her materials for promotion consideration.

But because the initial evaluation of her candidacy concludes in the spring of 2016, I want to also offer highlights of Cyndi's teaching contributions and innovations since that time, just to demonstrate that she remains an exemplar teaching faculty member in the College.

In the summer of 2016 – and with funds provided by the Office of International Programs – Cyndi traveled to South Korea to develop a Global Classroom with a faculty member at Ewha Womans University in Seoul (you and I were also travelers on that trip). Upon her return to Drexel, Cyndi incorporated the global connection into her CJS260- *Justice in our Community* course by “Skyping” with the parallel class (and students) from Ewha to collaborate on projects, compare notes on observations of public spaces, and generally share experiences from their local classrooms. Despite the twelve-hour time difference between Seoul and Philadelphia, Cyndi and the Korean professor (who was actually an American expat) worked with their students to make the synchronous timing work. This often meant swapping AM and PM time schedules so that for some sessions, Cyndi's students would meet in the early morning in Philadelphia and Skype the Ewha students, where it was evening in Seoul. For almost all those sessions, the two classes would “meet” over a meal: sometimes Cyndi's class would be eating breakfast while the Ewha students were eating dinner, and vice versa. As the Department Head watching all this from the sidelines, I can confidently assert that this particular global classroom was incredibly difficult to both develop and execute – partly because of the time-zone and course content differences, and partly because South Korean universities typically do not allow such “innovation” to occur in their curricula. But the greatest impact of that course was on the students who

participated in it. The Global Classroom with Ewha was a remarkable accomplishment on Cyndi's part, which required equal parts pedagogical expertise, and diplomacy.

In addition to developing the Global Classroom, Cyndi continues to expand her CJS261-*Prison, Society and You* course. In fact, Cyndi not only got prison officials to allow us to run a course in the facility each quarter, she has also gained increasing access for her students. That is, the *Prison, Society and You* course that Cyndi originally developed has evolved to include more contact hours and an expanded network of prison experiences, which has enhanced our students' experiences considerably over the past year and a half. Indeed, Cyndi has developed such a strong relationship with the Curran-Fromhold Correctional Facility that officials there recently purchased a free-standing white board for her prison classroom (in a cash-strapped facility whose philosophy is rooted almost exclusively in confinement and control, this was a gesture of enormous magnitude. And it means that Cyndi no longer has to lug pads of easel-sized paper in and out of the facility every week); and they recently allowed a photographer to complete a promotional photo shoot of a CJS student inside the facility. Again, such access is virtually unheard of in the world of corrections. Without Cyndi's continued efforts to expand and reimagine our two required community-based learning courses, our curriculum would begin to resemble those of the more traditional criminology programs – something we have taken pains to avoid.

Also in the area of community-based learning, Cyndi worked with me last quarter (or perhaps more accurately, I worked with Cyndi) to develop a new policing class in our department that will incorporate a Citizen Police Academy experience into its curriculum. We will team teach the course this spring in conjunction with the Drexel University Police Department. It will be a four-credit course that involves a weekly two-hour police academy experience, which will be then supported by a two-hour didactic session. For example, one week the students will learn how to conduct car stops by actually doing them in a closed parking lot with DUPD officers and patrol cars. In the didactic session to follow, students will learn about the research examining (1) car stop safety for officers, (2) the laws of probable cause that allow offices to stop vehicles, and (3) racial profiling in car stops and vehicle searches. By integrating an academy experience into the policing course, Cyndi has argued (convincingly) that our students will learn to view the job of policing through both the social science lens, as well as the lens of those who do the work and who are often forced to make split-second decisions about life and death.

Finally, for her pedagogical innovations, Cyndi and her community-based learning work were recently profiled in Gloria Cordes Larson's 2017 book, *Prepared U: How Innovative Colleges Drive Student Success* (Jossey-Bass Publishers¹), which examines how universities can develop progressive pedagogies to engage students and produce better outcomes among college graduates. Larson, who is president of Bentley University, includes sections on economically-based teaching innovations, hybrid learning, and place-based education. In her discussion of community-based learning Larson highlights Cyndi's *Prison, Society and You* course, calling out both Drexel and Cyndi by name:

¹ Jossey-Bass is an imprint of Wiley, one of the top commercial academic presses.

At Drexel University, Dr. Cyndi Rickards is senior assistant dean for community engagement. Her keen interest in the problems of America's prison population changed the outlooks of many students. One of these was Larissa Bundziak, whose study at Drexel's Pennoni Honors College for focused on public relations. (p. 111)

Larson then quotes the student directly:

Getting to know the inmates on such a personal profound level changed my life. I had never really thought about the incarcerated population, and none of us were criminal justice majors, but [Rickards] pushed us to go out there and interact with people who w otherwise would never had met. (p. 111)

In my view, this short quote sums up Cyndi's contribution to both the College and the Department of Criminology and Justice Studies: through her teaching and mentorship, Cyndi changes the lives of our students every day. And what I noted in my 2016 letter, I feel compelled to reiterate today: It is with great enthusiasm that I recommend my colleague, Dr. Cyndi Rickards, for promotion to Associate Teaching Professor.

Should you require additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Robert J. Kane". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Dr. Robert J. Kane



DREXEL UNIVERSITY

College of

Arts and Sciences

Criminology & Justice Studies

April 2, 2016

Dr. Donna Murasko, Professor and Dean
College of Arts and Sciences
Drexel University

Dear Dean Murasko,

I write this letter in strong support of Dr. Cyndi Rickards' promotion to Associate Teaching Professor in the Department of Criminology and Justice Studies. Before offering an independent assessment of Dr. Rickards' candidacy, I should first like to thank the Teaching Faculty Review Committee, which consisted of Dr. Robert D'Ovidio, Dr. Doug Porpora, and Dr. Simone Schlichting-Artur, for conducting such a thorough review of Dr. Rickards' portfolio.

I note that Dr. Rickards submitted for promotion consideration an electronic portfolio, which you can access by following this link: <http://cyndirickards.weebly.com>. This, almost by itself, offers insights into Cyndi's approach to teaching pedagogy, presentation innovation, and willingness to incorporate new media to enhance her abilities to connect and communicate with students and colleagues. Indeed, her readiness to adopt emerging technologies for pedagogical purposes has led to a number of teaching innovations that have become hallmarks of our department: iPads and mobile applications for incoming freshmen to help them catalogue and reflect on their classroom experiences, e-portfolios for our undergraduate students that give them a platform to virtually centralize their learning activities while at Drexel, and smartphone-enabled scavenger hunts around Philadelphia to introduce students to neighborhoods and community resources. And to be clear, Cyndi's integration of technology into her teaching is *substantive*. Her approach to technology amplifies our students' abilities to collect information on their educational activities, organize that information in meaningful ways, and then reflect on the experiences that produced the observations. By introducing our students to mobile applications such as ThingLink, Touchcast, Inspiration, and ATLAS.ti, – as well as by integrating Sim City into *Justice in our Community* – Dr. Rickards gives our students tools they can use across virtually all their classes to enhance learning experiences and outcomes. Moreover, her use of technological innovation – which encourages reflective practice among her students – fully supports several of Drexel's Student Learning Priorities, such as Communication, Technology Use, Information Literacy, and Creative and Critical Thinking.

In addition to the pedagogical creativity Dr. Rickards brings to her individual classes, she also invests a great deal of time and energy in the overall CJS curriculum, particularly in the area of community-based and experiential learning. When I first came to Drexel as Director of (then) Criminal Justice (Fall 2012), I had several ideas about what I thought cutting-edge Criminology and Justice curricula should include; and none of them considered community-based learning. Why? Because I had never heard of CBL. But then Cyndi – whom (at that point) I had known for approximately one week – brought ideas for two CBL courses that she hoped to create: *Justice in our Community*, and *Prison, Society & You*. When she developed and offered these courses for the

first time, they were so successful that our department included them as required courses in our new CJS curricula. Indeed, *Justice in our Community, and Prison, Society & You* are more than successful; they are transformative. Students have told me that these two courses have changed their outlooks the *meanings* of justice, in some cases their career choices, as well as the ways in which they view crime and crime policy in the United States. The CBL courses that Cyndi developed are quickly becoming a hallmark of the Department of Criminology and Justice Studies, which represents one crucial piece of our department's external identity.

In addition to teaching, Dr. Rickards also conducts scholarly research, mostly in the broad area teaching pedagogy (particularly involving side-by-side courses); and she has published and/or presented several papers as evidence of her research activities. In this regard, Dr. Rickards, as a model teaching faculty member, has created a nice cycle whereby her teaching influences her research, her research takes her to meetings where she learns about new teaching innovations, which she then brings back to Drexel and incorporates into her classes. Her connectivity to the world of pedagogical research beyond Drexel allows her to infuse our department with fresh ideas from all over the country, and even internationally.

Currently, Dr. Rickards is part time in the Dean's Office, and part time in CJS. As Dr. Rickards begins to think about the next phase of her career, I would like to see her begin to spend a bit more time in the Department as a lead teaching faculty member who continues to introduce pedagogical innovation into our curriculum, who resumes her creative approaches to recruitment and student engagement, and who helps push our department so that we offer our students even more experiential learning options. Moreover, recently, Cyndi has taken an interest in developing a Global Classroom analogue to *Justice in our Community*. I hope she continues to build-out this idea (which would include locating a global partner), as Global Perspective is one of our department's key values.

Again, I fully support Dr. Cyndi Rickards' promotion to Associate Teaching Professor. She is an integral part of our teaching and service mission, she is a wonderful citizen in our department, and I look forward to working with her during the next phase of her career.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Robert J. Kane". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Robert J. Kane, Ph.D.
Professor and Department Head

**Drexel University
College of Arts & Sciences
Department of Criminology & Justice Studies**

**Report of Dr. Cyndi Rickards' Promotion Committee
Evaluating her Candidacy for Promotion to Associate Teaching Professor
April 2016**

**Review Committee
Robert D'Ovidio, Ph.D. (chair)
Douglas V. Porpora, Ph.D.
Simone Schlichting-Artur, Ph.D.**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Impressed with Dr. Cyndi Rickards' record of university and community service and teaching excellence, the committee recommends that Dr. Rickard's be promoted to Associate Teaching Professor.

COMMITTEE STRUCTURE AND METHODS OF EVALUATION

The following report reviews Dr. Cyndi Rickards' teaching and service activities as part of a review for her promotion to associate teaching professor in the Department of Criminology & Justice Studies. The review committee members were Drs. Rob D'Ovidio, Douglas Porpora, and Simone Schlichting-Artur. Dr. D'Ovidio is an Associate Professor in the Department of Criminology & Justice Studies and the Associate Dean for Social Science and Humanities Research and Graduate Studies in the College of Arts & Sciences. Dr. Porpora is a Professor in the Department of Anthropology and Director of the MS and Ph.D. programs in Communication, Culture, and Media. Dr. Schlichting-Artur is a teaching professor in the Department of Global Studies and Modern Languages and Senior Assistant Dean for Global Initiatives in the College of Arts & Sciences. All members of the review committee previously held faculty posts with Dr. Rickards in the recently-dissolved Department of Culture & Communication. Drs. Schlichting-Artur and Porpora are, thus, well-suited to review Dr. Rickards' record despite not holding faculty posts in her current department.

Upon its appointment, the committee followed the standard procedure of having Dr. Rickards prepare a dossier of her service activities and teaching accomplishments, including a vita; statement of teaching philosophy; syllabi; and student course evaluations. These materials were reviewed by the committee. Additionally, Dr. Porpora sat in on one of Dr. Rickards' classes to see her pedagogy in action.

BACKGROUND

Currently, Dr. Rickards is an Assistant Teaching Professor in the Department of Criminology & Justice Studies. She joined Drexel in June 2009 as an Instructor for the Criminal Justice and Sociology programs in the Department of Culture & Communication. Cyndi was promoted to assistant teaching professor in 2012 and named Senior Assistant Dean for Community Engagement in the College of Arts & Sciences in 2015. Her faculty line was transferred to the Department of Criminology & Justice Studies in 2014 when the College of Arts & Sciences dissolved the Department of Culture & Communication as part of a restructuring of the social sciences. Prior to coming to Drexel, Dr. Rickards held a full-time teaching post in the Department of Sociology and Criminal Justice at St. Joseph's University.

Dr. Rickards has an interesting and varied background. After receiving her B.S. in Biology from St. Joseph's University, she earned an M.S. in Criminal Justice in 1998. Cyndi went on to earn an Ed.D. in Educational Leadership and Policy from Drexel University in 2015. Her experience at Drexel as a teacher and leader in community-based learning shaped and informed the outcome of her dissertation and guides her current research agenda and pedagogical approach in the classroom.

TEACHING

Review of Teaching Record:

Dr. Rickards' teaching is not only defined by her expertise in criminal justice and gender issues but also by the belief that teaching is a continuum of her experience inside as well as outside of the classroom. She has thoughtfully designed her classes to incorporate ways in which students can engage with outside communities in order to understand "the humans behind the statistics." Dr. Rickards' community-based approach to teaching and learning has enriched the departments' curriculum and served as an example for other disciplines to emulate.

During her tenure at Drexel University, Dr. Rickards has developed and taught a wide range of courses in the Criminal Justice and Sociology programs and Department of Criminology & Justice Studies. The full range of courses demonstrates her in-depth understanding of her discipline and her willingness to apply various methods of teaching. Table 1 lists these courses. In total, she has taught 13 different courses. Three of 13 courses (i.e. Culture of Poverty; Justice in our Community; and Prison, Society and You) are new courses that were conceptualized and designed by Dr. Rickards. The Culture of Poverty; Justice in our Community; and Prison, Society and You courses are community-based courses that involved Drexel students learning and working "side-by-side" with members of community groups related to the course topic. Two of these "side-by-side" courses (i.e. Justice in our Community and Prison, Society, and You) have become integral parts of the curriculum for students majoring in Criminology & Justice Studies. It should be noted that community-based side-by-side courses are extremely laborious to plan

and teach given the coordination with the partners and students from the community who are involved with the class. As well, Dr. Rickards has taught at a 50% reduced load since 2012 given her administrative appointment in the College of Arts & Sciences.

Dr. Rickards was an early adopter of online teaching and was instrumental in establishing the online degree program for what was the Criminal Justice program and now is the Department of Criminology & Justice Studies. Her work with the online degree program included redeveloping seven courses from the campus-based curriculum so that they may delivered to online students through BlackBoard Learn (see Table 1). The campus-based program has also benefited from Cyndi’s experience with distance learning technologies in that she has offered a hybrid version of her Race and Ethnicity course that met both online and in-person. Hybrid courses provide students with flexible options for scheduling.

Table 1: Courses Taught by Dr. Cyndi Rickards

Corrections [#]	Criminal Procedure [#]	Culture of Poverty ^{*+}
Gender, Crime and Justice [#]	Intro to Criminal Justice [#]	Intro to Sociology
Justice in our Community ^{*+}	Juvenile Justice [#]	Prison, Society and You ^{*+}
Race and Ethnicity	Sentencing	Social Problems [#]
Sociology of Deviance [#]		

* New course developed for the curriculum by Dr. Rickards

+ Community-based learning/side-by-side course

Course developed for online delivery by Dr. Rickards

Dr. Rickards’ experience with students extends beyond the traditional college class setting. She has supervised undergraduate students in independent studies and mentored a student for her senior thesis. She has also provided an undergraduate research experience for a student in the Department Criminology & Justice Studies. The student examined civic and democratic engagement in college classes taught using a side-by-side format.

Six beliefs guide Dr. Rickards in her teaching and when designing courses. They are respect of students and their experiences, disciplinary research, differential learning styles and assessment, empathetic learning and human contact, clarifying the ambiguities, and a well-defined course. It is obvious from the review of Dr. Rickards’ syllabi and course materials and in experiencing one of her class sessions first-hand that she puts these beliefs into practice. Her courses are well-structured. She is very detailed when it comes to explaining the objectives, requirements, assignments, and grading criteria for her courses. Her syllabi meet the evolving University syllabus requirements. After sitting in on one of Dr. Rickards’ class sessions for her Culture of Poverty course, Dr. Porpora noted “It was not just the pattern of classroom discussion that amazed me but the sophistication with which the students spoke about the culture of poverty as a concept and as a theory, critiquing it from different angles that related to their sown service learning experience at *Lift*” (see Appendix for a report from Dr. Porpora’s class visit). His observations certainly speak to a faculty member who knows how to get students engaged and how to direct them in participation that is informed and respectful of different points of view.

Dr. Rickards strong commitment to teaching and assessment has also been recognized by colleagues and peers from outside her home departments and outside of Drexel University. She is the recipient of the National Distance Education Award (2011), Dr. Mark L. Greenberg Distinguished Faculty Award for Community-Based Experiential Learning (2012), and Drexel University Assessment and Pedagogy Award (2014). In 2015, Cyndi was nominated by her peers at Drexel for the nationally competitive Lynton Award based on her work in community-based learning and her side-by-side approach to teaching. The awards and nomination are certainly a mark of excellence and an achievement most successful professors do not even attain even after spending decades in the profession.

Teaching Recommendations:

The committee commends Dr. Rickards on her teaching record while at Drexel. We look forward to her continued use of innovative pedagogy in the classroom and in seeing how these innovations reshape her classes and add to the Department's curriculum. We encourage Cyndi to explore the global educational partnerships the College and University have established to see if they may be used to advance her side-by-side model of teaching. We also encourage Dr. Rickards to take a systematic look at her approach in the classroom to better understand its impact on the learning process and to disseminate her findings at professional conferences and in the educational journals. Lastly, we recommend Dr. Rickards not go below a two-course per term teaching load so she has ample experience as she prepares for promotion to full teaching professor in the years to come. Maintaining this teaching load will allow the Department to take advantage of her innovative approach to teaching when setting its schedule.

SERVICE

Review of Service Record:

Marked now by her position as Senior Assistant Dean for Community Engagement, Dr. Rickards' service contribution to the institution can only be described as phenomenal. Since coming to Drexel in 2009 as an Instructor for the Criminal Justice and Sociology programs in the Department of Culture & Communication, she has been an unstoppable force moving the University in a progressive direction.

Initially, Dr. Rickards was hired to teach, especially online, and she came to direct the Department's online program, which has since advanced impressively. But on her own initiative, Dr. Rickards also led, first her Department and then the entire College of Arts & Science, in the area of civic engagement, which is now such a key orientation of the University as a whole.

Early on, Dr. Rickards began experimenting with service learning classes, and went on to become a Lindy Center Faculty Fellow. From there, she went on to join the Dornsife Leadership Committee in the president's office.

Along the way, Dr. Rickards introduced Drexel University to the National Program called Inside-Out that conducts joint classrooms with outside students from universities and inside inmate populations in correctional institutions. There is an entire week-long training required to participate in this program, and Dr. Rickards organized several waves of Drexel faculty to take that training and to teach in that program at Curran Fromhold Correctional Facility.

But actually the introduction to Drexel of Inside-Out was not enough for Dr. Rickards. She took that model and expanded it creatively to form a program called Side-by-Side. Side-by-Side works in a way similar to Inside-Out but instead of partnering with correctional institutions, it partners with other civic institutions helping underserved populations in Drexel's neighborhood. In this case, too, Dr. Rickards organized and trained faculty to participate.

It is no wonder that Dr. Rickards was made the College of Arts & Sciences' Coordinator for Community Outreach and promoted finally to Senior Assistant Dean for Community Engagement. She has won several awards for her work in this area and has earned more than her share of media publicity for Drexel.

Drexel University now aspires to be the most civically engaged university in the country. It is a lofty ambition. But Dr. Rickards was there first, already leading us in this direction – and to the extent that Drexel University achieves this goal, it will be in no small measure due to Dr. Rickards' efforts. Such level of service would be outstanding for a tenured research professor. It would certainly be commensurate with promotion to full teaching professor. As a service contribution of an assistant teaching professor, it is well above what should be considered the standard even for outstanding service contribution.

Beyond her service efforts in the area of civic engagement, Dr. Rickards has served on university and college level committees pertaining to teaching assessments, online learning, cross-college curriculum development, curricular innovation, online course evaluations, scholarship reviews, and academic portfolios. She also headed her Department's review team for Middle States reaccreditation.

Service Recommendations:

The committee applauds Dr. Rickards on her service record and in her commitment to advance Drexel, the College of Arts & Sciences, and the Department of Criminology & Justice Studies. Dr. Rickards' service on multiple committees at the college and university levels is more in line with the expectations of a senior faculty member and someone who is coming up for promotion to full teaching professor. As Cyndi prepares for promotion to full teaching professor, we recommend that she adjust the mix of her service commitments to focus more on service to the Department of Criminology & Justice Studies. This will be especially helpful in the running of the Department given the small size of the faculty. Given Dr. Rickards' experience, she is well-suited to mentor faculty in the Department of Criminology & Justice Studies who share teaching responsibilities for justice-oriented community-based learning

courses and who are looking to have students work in the Powelton and Mantua communities for class-related projects. Her passion for community-based learning in the fields of criminology and criminal justice can have quite a positive impact on students. As such, we recommend that she shift some of her service focus to student recruitment and retention efforts that will help the Department of Criminology & Justice Studies continue to build its student population. Dr. Rickards' experience and expertise in online education makes her ideally suited to represent her department at the college level when it comes initiatives and committees involving distance learning and related technologies. As well, we encourage her to take an active role in moving the online program for the Department of Criminology & Justice Studies forward.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION

Dr. Rickards has demonstrated excellence in teaching and service at Drexel. Cyndi has made significant contributions to the curriculum in her home departments. She is innovative in her teaching and has succeeded in helping her department and college extend the boundaries of the traditional classroom out into the community. Her service work has advanced the College of Arts & Sciences, Drexel University, the Department of Criminology & Justice Studies, and the community beyond our campus. As such, the review committee recommends Dr. Rickards for promotion to Associate Teaching Professor in the Department of Criminology & Justice Studies.

APPENDIX – Cyndi Rickards Classroom Visit Report by Dr. Porpora

Shortly after she came to Drexel, Dr. Cyndi Rickards invited me to attend one of her classes. She did so because her class was innovative in two respects. First, it was a community-engaged course, conducted at *Lift*, a civic community partner, at which her students engaged in service learning. Second, Dr. Rickards was using the Harkness Discussion method that assigned students an assortment of different roles, such as reporter and facilitator.

The course was on the Culture of Poverty, which is a sociological term for a particular understanding of the cause of poverty. It is a subject that I as a sociologist have taught in a number of my own classes.

I can only say I was amazed at what I encountered in Dr. Rickard's class. In most classrooms, any discussion is a two-way, back-and-forth between the student and the teacher. As a matter of fact, such two-way pattern between presenter and audience questioner is how conversation normally goes as well at academic conferences.

In Dr. Rickard's class I found something completely different. The students more or less carried on the discussion in an orderly fashion on their own, Dr. Richards interceding only when needed. It was not needed much. Instead of the two-way pattern described above, the students spoke to each other, responding to each other's points in a way that included almost everyone.

It was not just the pattern of classroom discussion that amazed me but the sophistication with which the students spoke about the culture of poverty as a concept and as a theory, critiquing it from different angles that related to their sown service learning experience at *Lift*.

I came away sold on this particular community partnership with Lift, sold on the Harkness method, and sold on Richards as an innovative, highly effective, truly outstanding teacher, from whom even an old veteran like me had something important to learn.