



DREXEL UNIVERSITY

Academic Programs

Pennoni Honors College

January 10, 2024

Dear Members of the Review Committee:

I am writing this letter of recommendation in support of Dr. Cyndi Rickards' application portfolio for promotion. I have collaborated with Dr. Rickards on an intensive course abroad to the Netherlands focusing on comparative systems of justice between Philadelphia and Amsterdam. Throughout that experience, I was able to directly observe her commitment to global education through both her teaching practices and abilities to develop and maintain a strategic international partnership. Such a commitment to global education requires a constellation of skills – planning, coordination, curricular development, and student support, among others – along with being a superior teacher. Based on my work with her and those observations, I strongly recommend Dr. Rickards for promotion.

To facilitate this intensive course abroad, and its accompanying global classroom, Dr. Rickards developed strong ties with colleagues at the Amsterdam University of Applied Sciences. This partnership was instrumental in delivering high impact educational experiences for our students across two iterations of both the global classroom and the intensive course abroad. In terms of the former, the comparative study of systems of justice was aided by co-instruction with our Dutch colleagues as well as opportunities for students to collaborate on project-based learning across the two universities. For the intensive course abroad, the partnership helped to facilitate numerous site visits and meetings with experts and practitioners in fields including substance abuse and drug policy, policing, social housing and architecture, and governance. As Drexel seeks to develop global citizens, experiences like this are essential to that effort.

Observing these efforts firsthand, I can attest to the immense amount of effort that goes into the planning and execution of an intensive course abroad of this caliber. While our Dutch partners were instrumental in helping to make connections, Dr. Rickards was responsible for the overall management of the course and its itinerary, including making arrangements for travel and lodging, communicating plans to students, orchestrating meetings with experts, and, of course, the development and execution of its curriculum. This is all incredibly labor intensive, and Dr. Rickards approached the design and delivery of the experience thoughtfully and with intentionality. This resulted in a learning experience for students that was cohesive, comprehensive, and cogent.

Meeting with and having a guided tour by a former substance abuser provided students an opportunity to learn about how individuals navigate systems of enforcement and rehabilitation – seeing these interactions, it was noticeable that students were truly gaining empathy and understanding. Having access to members of the Dutch Police force helped students gain comparative knowledge of systems of law enforcement. Tours that covered topics like Nazi occupation of the Netherlands and the architecture of public housing helped students understand the historical trauma of the country as well as social programs intended to grapple with inequality. Throughout, Dr. Rickards asked probing questions of the students, provided time and space to reflect on their experiences, and helped to guide them through difficult subjects and



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conversations. It was a learning experience for me to see her in action, and I have no doubt that all students who took part in these trips benefitted immeasurably from her instruction.

Consequently, please consider this a strong and enthusiastic endorsement of Dr. Rickards for promotion. Since “harnessing the power of partnerships” and developing “meaningful immersive learning experiences” are imperatives of Drexel’s strategic plan, faculty like Dr. Rickards are essential to achieving those goals. Her efforts have enhanced Drexel’s standing as a partner with our Dutch colleagues, and the intensive course abroad is just a microcosm of the immersive learning experiences she provides for students. I have consistently been impressed by her thoughtful approach to course design along with her pedagogical practices inside and outside of the classroom. She is an excellent teacher and the kind of educator who is an invaluable resource to both students and colleagues alike. If you have any questions, or need any additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'K. Egan', written in a cursive style.

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