



Dear Tenure and Promotion Committee:

I write you today with my confident and full support for Dr. Chris Friend's tenure package. Since he joined Saint Leo's faculty, he has proven himself to be consistently focused on teaching and learning, and has contributed significantly to both the Department of Language Studies and the Arts and our university community in meaningful and lasting ways.

Chris's hire is unique in that he is the first Rhetoric/ Composition specialist to join the Department of Language Studies and the Arts—the department responsible for delivering the largest number of required courses *in composition* to students university-wide. Chris's charge upon hire was to rethink and redesign these courses (primarily ENG 121, and 122) for delivery in different media, to students online, at centers, and at University Campus. He was up for the challenge, and has worked tirelessly since his first year as a faculty member to breathe new life into these courses. Though I'm confident that you've read this elsewhere in his portfolio, I want to be counted among the voices that proclaim his efforts a success: WRI 121 and 122 were enthusiastically received by the UE committee, and by the time you read this, the courses will have been approved by that body and on their way to (if not through) the Undergraduate Curriculum Committee.

I'd like to emphasize the arduous and challenging path that led to this success. From the point of his hire, Chris approached this project thoughtfully and intentionally, undertaking to learn about Saint Leo not only as a new faculty member, but also as a faculty member invested in effecting positive change in a key requirement of our curriculum. He embarked on this endeavor by first learning about his department and guiding a committee of faculty volunteers through a reading and discussion series based on a collection of pedagogical articles that shape his approach to composition. That reading series helped him identify the common ground shared by faculty members who taught and would continue to teach composition courses, and starting in his second year at Saint Leo, Chris regularly convened this committee to further explore the details of what that common ground would look like in the redesigned composition classroom.

These meetings, which took place over the course of a year and a half, were frequently complicated, fraught with various opposing faculty opinions from faculty members of diverse scholarly backgrounds. At each turn, Chris navigated all challenges respectfully and thoughtfully. He worked to help the group overcome significant differences in opinion over the future content of composition courses, and we reached the first of several compromises that would appease all interests. The process continued in Chris's third year at Saint Leo, when a first attempt at passing curriculum changes was not successful. Through his fourth year and into his



fifth, Chris guided a few volunteer faculty members through yet another iteration of the proposals—an iteration that was not approved for various reasons. Ultimately, throughout the last year, he worked with a small committee of faculty that represented each of the English specializations, and with their collaborative efforts, created the successful proposals that UE is now considering. These proposals include not only the many strengths of each earlier design, but they also reflect an attentiveness to *why* those proposals were not successful, with attention to faculty concerns and administrative logistics. I fully believe that the new WRI 121 and 122 will serve our students across the university community, and Chris fully deserves to be celebrated for his leadership and steadfastness in creating them.

Again, I'd like to to underscore the scope of this project in highlighting Chris's leadership: to thoroughly and successfully redesign these courses, he has

- Taught each course multiple times through a variety of delivery platforms;
- Become familiar with and invested in a multitude of interests in these courses across the university, including full-time English faculty on campus, the department chairs whose courses require ENG 122 as a prerequisite, adjunct and full-time English faculty at the centers, online program advisors, and the UEAC;
- Explored textbook and OER options;
- Developed learning outcomes for redesigned ENG 121 and 122;
- Developed syllabi for redesigned ENG 121 and 122;
- Developed a "You asked; we listened" document for faculty that addresses each of their concerns thoughtfully and respectfully;
- Written the UEAC proposal, presented the new courses to the UEAC, and is ready to take them through the UCC.

Moving ahead, Chris will design a training platform for instructors to aid in their transition from the previous structure to the future structure and serve as course designer for at least one of these courses to move online.

In addition to this notable work, Chris has demonstrated leadership in our University community as well, most notably in supporting students in building Prism, a gay-straight alliance organization that, with Chris's support and enthusiasm, is approved by Saint Leo University administration and recognized by SGU. As part of this organization, he developed Safe Zone training for faculty and staff, a voluntary professional development session that he offers several times a semester so that attendees may more fully be aware of and sensitive to the strengths, needs, and vulnerabilities of the LGBTQ student community on campus.





While you'll find his publication record impressive and his teaching evaluations reflective of his purposeful style, I want to highlight his contributions to the department community. As department chair from the point of his hire through August 2018, I consistently found Chris to be an outspoken, reasonable, and thoughtful member of our department. He is a clear advocate for issues, enterprises, and creative outlets that relate to his scholarly work, and seeks opportunity to contribute to the department and the university in those areas. I am proud of the work he's done, both related to curriculum and to supporting the growth and development of all students, and feel he is fully deserving of the honor of tenure. He embodies so many of our core values, particularly—but not exclusively—Excellence, Integrity, and Community.

I fully support his tenure application, and am happy provide further feedback if needed.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Elisabeth Aiken".

Elisabeth Aiken, Ph. D.