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To Whom It May Concern:

It is with pleasure that I write this letter in support of Dr. Chris Friend's bid for tenure. Having worked with Chris for several years, I can tell you that he is a tremendous asset to the university. While our paths frequently cross on committees and service projects, there is one project that Chris and I have collaborated on extensively: Prism, the LGBTQ+ student support group on campus.

This group, which is now entering its third year as an SGU-recognized student organization, faced a years-long journey to recognition. I became involved in 2015 as a Faculty Advisor, but it was not until Chris Friend joined ranks with me as Co-Faculty Advisor that we gained traction. Without his efforts, I seriously doubt this group would have ever come into being. After the club's recognition, I resigned as co-Advisor leaving Prism in the abundantly capable hands of Chris entirely.

Prism is unlike any other student group in that numerous studies have proven that LGBTQ+ students are much less likely to commit suicide if they have the support of a community. I will never forget the moment when, discussing this fact, Chris said quietly, "Not on my watch. Not if there is anything I can do about it." In our field, we often see the true heart of a teacher revealed, when all the bluff and bluster of our busy schedules fall away, and we see the big-souled love that motivates a teacher to go the extra mile, or five. This was one of those moments.

As the faculty Advisor of Prism, Chris makes absolutely certain that Prism is at all Open Houses and all Involvement Fairs. He makes sure the club partners with Green Dot several times a semester to further extend the reach and visibility of Prism. He also leads, via Prism, the Safe Zone training program. Safe Zone offers awareness and sensitivity training regarding identity and sexuality to the entire community of Saint Leo. Each training session is intense, several hours long, and requires significant preparation. Even in the midst of the busy school year, Chris has shepherded 47 people, as of this writing, through Safe Zone training.

To ensure that Prism grows into a strong and sustaining community, Chris took a promising group of students to the Florida Collegiate Pride Coalition last Spring. This event provided the



student-leaders of Prism with the opportunity to network and learn from gay-straight alliances across the state. It's work such as this that earned Chris the "Outstanding Club Advisor" recognition by the Student Government Association in 2018.

Why do all this? Why not mentor another student group where the risk of controversy and emotional toll of being an ally and a leader are not so high? The answer is in Chris' statement: "Not on my watch. Not if there is anything I can do about it." The grit, boundless agape, and years of dedicated labor that mark Chris's devotion to Prism are the very foundation stones of servant-leadership wherein personal needs are sacrificed for the good of the community.

For his work with Prism, and so many other reasons, Chris has my unqualified support. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Karen Hannel