August 15, 2022

Dr. Natalie Mountjoy's Tenure & Promotion Committee
Western Kentucky University

Dear Tenure and Promotion Committee,

It is with great pleasure that I write this letter of support for Dr. Natalie Mountjoy's tenure and promotion file. I enthusiastically support her for two principal reasons. First, not only does Dr. Mountjoy have an impressive record of professional development as it relates to pedagogy, she has also led and facilitated numerous sessions related to teaching and learning that have been sponsored by, or associated with, the CITL. In that sense, she is both a peer to her colleagues and a leader in advancing the teaching mission of the university. Second, Dr. Mountjoy has demonstrated her commitment to student success through dedicated teaching service. This is best exemplified with her participation in the Gateway Initiative, during which she partnered with the CITL and the Burch Institute in addressing the DFW rate in introductory Biology courses. Moreover, her use of the supplemental instructional model illustrates her ingenuity and student-centered approach to all aspects of instruction.

One example of Dr. Mountjoy' commitment to evidence-based teaching and learning at WKU is her leadership in the conversation related to metacognition. Drs. Mountjoy and McDaniel led these conversation in multiple forums, including the WKU Student Success Summit, CITL Winter Workshop, and "unofficially" to the second and third cohorts of the Gateway Initiative. I am grateful to Dr. Mountjoy for sharing her insights as this has led others to also consider how to better serve our students through effective classroom instruction. In addition to metacognition, I have seen Dr. Mountjoy's positive impact on her colleagues when she led and facilitated a panel titled "Keeping it After COVID: Lessons Learned That We Might Apply Post-Pandemic." In this session, Dr. Mountjoy modeled self-reflection, vulnerability and a willingness to stretch herself as an instructor in order to truly meet the needs of our students. The feedback from faculty attending Dr. Mountjoy's sessions is consistently so positive that her name is always mentioned by CITL staff as a gold standard in moderating and facilitating workshops on teaching and learning. We always ask ourselves: "Can we get someone who's as good as Natalie?" Her distinct perspective and pedagogical acumen are prized by many across campus.

Dr. Mountjoy's participation in the second cohort of the Gateway Initiative was laudatory in all respects. Not only did she embrace this initiative as a way to improve the success rates in her introductory biology course, she also provided other participants with ideas to optimize their teaching approaches in colonnade courses. In that sense, Dr. Mountjoy was simultaneously a participant and change-agent. As the Gateway Initiative advances and as Dr.

Mountjoy's data matures, I know that her work will advance our understanding of which factors positively impact student academic achievement during their first year in introductory coursework. Her dedication to students and the institution shine through in other ways as well. For instance, her work on using supplemental instruction as a way to boost retention and academic achievement has prompted me to consider ways in which we can formalize this model on campus. Additionally, I was fortunate to have Dr. Mountjoy on the team that participated in AAC&U's 2019 Institute on General Education and Assessment in Burlington, VT. As a team, we we returned to campus with a workable action plan that operationalized the assessment of the Colonnade General Education Program. This could not have happened without her involvement and sagacious input.

In summation, the kind of excellence that Dr. Mountjoy has demonstrated is extremely rare. In addition to being an adept, engaged, and innovative pedagogue in her own classroom, she is also a leader in advancing meaningful programmatic change at the departmental and university level. From her work on metacognition to her service on assessing WKU's general education program, Dr. Mountjoy has proven her mettle as a positive change agent and catalyst. I am certain that as associate professor, Dr. Mountjoy's contribution will become only more impactful.

Sincerely,

Marko Dumančić, Ph.D.
Associate Professor, History
Director, CITL