December 28, 2020

Teaching Award Review Committee
Ogden College of Science & Engineering
Western Kentucky University

Dear OCSE Teaching Award Review Committee:

Dr. Natalie Mountjoy is a stellar nominee for the OCSE Teaching Award. I recommend her with great enthusiasm and my wholehearted support.

Most faculty join a department and become valuable members of the departmental team. On occasion, a new faculty member establishes a leadership role early on and facilities new directions. Rarely, an individual can change the way the department, the institution, and indeed the profession operates. Dr. Natalie Mountjoy is that rare individual. In just 3.5 years, her impact has been profound.

Dr. Mountjoy was hired to teach and oversee the introductory biology courses and laboratories for majors. As documented in her application, she is a fantastic teacher and directly interacts with hundreds of students every semester. As part of her responsibilities, she also trains and oversees the biology graduate teaching assistants who instruct the introductory labs. She has completely rewritten our laboratory curriculum to create dynamic and interesting project-oriented labs. Her training of the graduate students has elevated the learning experience for the graduate and undergraduate students alike. Through her project approach, she has involved biology faculty as featured scientists. In addition, by establishing a solid foundation for learning in the introductory courses, she has influenced how the department is educating students throughout the curriculum. What started as a ripple is becoming a powerful wave of change. Importantly, this is not change for the sake of change. Dr. Mountjoy documents outcomes and evaluates processes, leading to data driven modifications to how and what is taught. On top of these profound alterations, she played in instrumental role in adapting the courses to virtual and hybrid formats, keeping the welfare of students foremost in her priorities.

Dr. Natalie Mountjoy is both a practitioner and a student of improved pedagogy. She has participated in numerous professional development activities on and off campus in face-to-face and virtual settings. She has played an active role in the departmental and college retention and strategic planning initiatives. Her involvement with the Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning and national workshops have enhanced the learning environment at WKU. Publications in process from her documented teaching strategies will influence the profession for years to come.

I was the Department Head of Biology when we conducted the search for the pedagogy position for which we hired Dr. Natalie Mountjoy. I believe that I can speak for the entire department when I

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say we made a fantastic selection. I have observed her teaching, served as a member of her mentoring committee, and had numerous dialogues with her on pedagogy and the future of education. Natalie performs in the highest professional manner, and she is a wonderful colleague and person. She is worthy of the college and university awards for teaching.

Please contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Bruce A. Schulte, Ph.D.
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Executive Director of the WKU Research Foundation
University Distinguished Professor
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