
Kenneth Elgersma
Chair, Faculty Senate
University of Northern Iowa
Cedar Falls, IA 50614

November 10, 2024

Dear Faculty Senate Chair Elgersma:

I am pleased to provide this letter in support of Department of History Associate Professor Robert Dise's application for emeritus status. As a member of the department for more than three decades, Professor Dise has made sustained and substantive contributions to the Department of History and the College of Social and Behavioral Sciences at the University of Northern Iowa. His achievements in teaching and service create a powerful personal and professional legacy of and have enriched the University of Northern Iowa and Cedar Falls community.

Professor Dise has had an outstanding record as a teacher during his tenure at UNI. His academic specialty is ancient history, and he has contributed many popular courses to the History Department's curriculum in that content area. He was long an anchor of the department's first and third courses within the three-course Western humanities sequence in the Liberal Arts Core, post-2004, and both courses within the pre-2004 two-course sequence, routinely teaching large introductory sections to UNI undergraduate students, amounting to hundreds of students each semester. As a result, he played a significant role in the general education of thousands of UNI students, an achievement recognized through the College of Social and Behavioral Sciences Outstanding Teaching Award in 2019 and the prestigious Class of 1943 Faculty Award for Excellence in Teaching in 2020. A history-oriented version of the Western humanities courses, now taught as Premodern West and Modern West, continues in the department's curriculum, thanks to his willingness to redesign the content and objectives beyond the termination of the LAC. For History and Social Sciences majors Professor Dise's popular four-course sequence in ancient history – The Ancient Near East, The History of Ancient Greece, The History of Ancient Rome, and Greek and Roman Life and Culture – have long proved an irresistible draw. They are consistently among the department's most popular offerings, frequently the first courses to close in each registration period. Student evaluations laud Professor Dise's instructional techniques, particularly his compelling lecture style.

Professor Dise has also compiled a record of active service during his decades at UNI. His contributions at the university level have been sustained and meaningful. Among his many university-level service appointments have been terms on the Liberal Arts Core Review Committee, the United Faculty Central Committee, the Committee on General Education, and the Student Assessment Review Committee. He has also served as faculty advisor for Phi Eta Sigma, Omicron Delta Kappa, and the UNI Campus Episcopalian Fellowship. At the college-level he performed distinguished service on the College of Social and Behavioral Sciences Senate, twice serving as chair (2018-2020, 2022-2023) and once serving as vice chair (2017-2018). For more than a decade he also served on the College's scholarship selection committee. Within the department he served on multiple search committees and served terms on nearly every departmental

governance and service group. Professor Dise currently serves as the faculty coordinator of the annual Phi Alpha Theta Lecture Series, which brings valuable historical content and dynamic speakers to UNI and Cedar Valley audiences. Beyond the university, he has reviewed grant applications of the National Endowment for the Humanities and for many years organized a community educational program focusing on the relationships and interaction between religion, society, and culture: The Canterbury Forum (established in 2005).

Professor Dise has a record of scholarly activities that reflects broad interests. After an early-career NEH summer stipend and publications focusing on ancient Roman history, including *Cultural Change and Imperial Administration* (Peter Lang, 1991), he completed a popular Great Courses course, *Ancient Empires before Alexander*, designed to acquaint non-academic audiences with important features of ancient history. He has devoted his later career to an examination of Little Big Horn and Plains Indians culture, a project that is coming to fruition in a book-length manuscript and that has powerfully influenced his most recent years of teaching as well, through his development of a course for UNIFI in the Responsibility category on the topic.

Based on his record of meaningful accomplishments as a UNI faculty member, I enthusiastically support Professor Robert Dise's application for emeritus status. This recognition would serve as a fitting celebration of a long career dedicated to UNI, his colleagues in History, and his many appreciative students.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jennifer McNabb". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Jennifer" being more prominent and the last name "McNabb" following in a similar style.

Jennifer McNabb
Department Head

Cc: Brenda Bass, Dean, College of Social and Behavioral Sciences
Evaluation File