

---

Alexa Clements  
Chair, Faculty Senate  
University of Northern Iowa  
Cedar Falls, IA 50614

November 15, 2025

Dear Faculty Senate Chair Clements:

I am pleased to provide this letter in support of Department of History Professor Wallace Hettle's application for emeritus status. Professor Hettle is a U.S. historian who received the Ph.D. in History from Northwestern University in 1994 and has been a faculty member in the Department of History at UNI since August 1994, earning tenure and promotion to the rank of Associate Professor in 2000 and promotion to the rank of Professor in 2011. I believe Professor Hettle's long career at UNI and meaningful achievements as a teacher-scholar warrant his recognition as an emeritus professor.

Professor Hettle has had a strong record as a teacher during his career at UNI. Professor Hettle's academic specialty is the American Civil War and Reconstruction. During his career at UNI he has taught the following courses: American Civilization (in the Liberal Arts Core), United States History to 1877, Civil War and Reconstruction, History of Iowa, The American Radical Tradition, junior/senior seminars on Slavery in America and Mark Twain's America, graduate seminars on the Civil War and the historiography of US history, an Honors course on The Lincoln Enigma, and travel courses for the Department of Continuing Education to Hannibal (Mark Twain's World), Chicago (Great American Cities), and the Mississippi (Iowa and the Mississippi). The Civil War course is one of his most important contributions to the department curriculum, as the course topic is a great draw for students, particularly teaching majors, who take Professor Hettle's work with them into their own classrooms across the state and beyond. In addition, Professor Hettle has sat on numerous MA thesis committees and served as instructor of many independent readings and thesis preparation courses. Student evaluations throughout his career have expressed appreciation for Professor Hettle's wit and erudition.

Professor Hettle has an accomplished record of scholarly activities. He achieved tenure on the strength of his first book, *The Peculiar Democracy: Southern Democrats in Peace and War* (University of Georgia Press, 2001), which was widely reviewed for its provocative interpretation of the Democratic Party in the South during the Civil War era. His second book, *Inventing Stonewall Jackson: A Civil War Hero in History and Memory* (Louisiana State University Press, 2011) supported his promotion to full Professor and made creative use of a wide variety of source material, and a

third text, *The Confederate Homefront: A History in Documents* (Louisiana State University Press) followed in 2017. A companion volume to the latter, *The Union Homefront: A Primary Source Reader*, has recently been published in open access format for scholars and students of history. Professor Hettle has also published nine articles in peer reviewed journals as well as invited essays, encyclopedia entries, dozens of book reviews, and commentaries and pieces for more popular news outlets such as *History News Network*. His thoughtful essay, "Losing My Career to Illness?", published in the *Chronicle of Higher Education* in 2014, sparked important conversations among faculty and administrators far outside of the field of history about the intersection of professional life and personal challenges. Professor Hettle's impressive scholarly output has created a powerful voice within the academic community and the broader public.

Professor Hettle has also compiled a record of active service during his decades at UNI. Professor Hettle has been active in service to the history profession at large, serving as a referee for multiple university and professional presses and several scholarly journals and serving as a member of the editorial board of *Midwest Review*. While these positions speak to the wide recognition of his academic expertise, his pattern of work has demonstrated his willingness to serve History's wider community of scholars. Professor Hettle has also given numerous public talks to the local, regional, and national communities, sharing his expertise with diverse and varied audiences. Professor Hettle has been good citizen of the university and the department as well. Most notably, he served for nearly two decades as the coordinator of the Phi Alpha Theta/History Club lecture series, which brought distinguished scholars to campus to deliver the annual Carl L. Becker Memorial Lecture in History. Professor Hettle has chaired or served as a member of multiple department search committees and functioned as the department's library liaison for U.S. History. Professor Hettle has served ably on nearly all of the department's standing committees, including the Professional Assessment Committee, the Policies and Planning Committee, and the Scholarship Committee. At the College and University level, he frequently served as a CSBS Scholarship Day interviewer, served on the UNI Museum Advisory Committee, was a member of the LAC Category 5 Coordinating Committee, and participated in a number of UNI panels and workshops on timely and relevant topics.

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

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Jennifer McNabb". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Jennifer" written in a larger, more prominent script than the last name "McNabb".

Jennifer McNabb  
Department Head

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