
April 14, 2021

Dr. John Burnight, Chair
University Faculty Senate
University of Northern Iowa
Cedar Falls, IA 50614
SENT VIA EMAIL

Dear Chair Burnight:

I write in support of Professor Ken Basom's application for emeritus status. Professor Basom came to the University of Northern Iowa in 1991 after visiting positions at two other universities from 1989-91. Promoted to associate professor in 1996, Prof. Basom has been a stellar university citizen and has contributed to a number of important initiatives at the departmental, college, and university levels during his 30 years here.

Prof. Basom's expertise lies in the politics of the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. He earned his Ph.D. from the University of Wisconsin in 1989 at the dawn of a period of tremendous change in the politics of that region. This transition presented a challenge to many young scholars of the era, but Prof. Basom adapted quickly and published a series of papers in the early 90s that examined democratic transitions, privatization, and environmentalism in Russia and Eastern Europe.

Throughout his time at UNI, Dr. Basom has been a dedicated teacher and mentor. In addition to teaching the Nonwestern Cultures Russia course, he has anchored the department's comparative politics curriculum, teaching our introductory-level course as well as with courses in Western European Politics, Russian and Eastern European Politics. In recent years, two of his more popular courses have centered on key issues that students have found highly relevant and engaging: Nationalism, and the Politics of Nonviolence. Prof. Basom has also given freely of his time to do independent study courses and supervise Honors theses. (Indeed, as just one indicator that he is finishing strong, he is supervising a thesis this semester). He enjoys taking on this work because he truly values in-depth conversation with students. One of the things I have missed during this pandemic-affected year has been walking down the Political Science hallway and hearing Ken's lively conversations with the students who come to office hours. Perhaps nothing speaks more to his dedication to students than the extra effort he has exerted within the past year. Ken would be the first one to tell you that he is not very comfortable with technology. During the past year, though, he has brought a positive attitude to learning new technology and has done what it takes to serve students and keep them engaged with his classes.

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During his 30 years at UNI, Professor Basom has consistently provided excellent service to our department, the College of Social Behavioral Sciences, and the University. He has long served as our "curriculum guru" within the department, his expertise developed over 12 years of service on the University Curriculum Committee. During his time at UNI he also served on the University Faculty Senate and the Alderman Scholarship Committee. I have always welcomed Ken's positive attitude and thoughtful contributions to departmental debates. As department head, I have been grateful for his willingness to pitch in wherever asked in order to help complete tasks and advance departmental interests.

I know I speak for all of my colleagues within the Department of Political Science when I say that we thank Dr. Basom for his meritorious service to UNI. We will miss him, but we wish him a very happy and fulfilling retirement.

Very Truly Yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "C. Scott Peters".

C. Scott Peters
Professor and Department Head