

3/9/2022

To the UNI Faculty Senate:

I whole-heartedly endorse the request for Emeritus status from Professor Gretta Berghammer.

Professor Berghammer has had an illustrious career as an educator and artist. Her achievements have been characterized by the creation of new work, significant outreach to the community, prolific grant-writing to support her projects, contributions to the literature of her discipline, and the creation of significant opportunities for students through ongoing connections to professional theaters.

In her time at UNI, Gretta has been responsible for several youth theatre tours to underserved populations. This work has included a focus on inclusionary practices for participants and audience members on the Autism Spectrum. She has consistently created substantial experiential opportunities for UNI students, and her extensive outreach into the community has increased visibility for the university.

She has also created immersive-theatre experiences for students with exceptionalities, such as a NASA-supported project called *To Touch The Moon* - a devised theatre experience targeted to youth on the autism spectrum and celebrating the 50th anniversary of the first manned mission to the moon. It was a uniquely creative way to connect to STEM fields through a theatrical experience. This project was created under her guidance through the mechanisms of two departmental courses, extensive grant-writing efforts, and consultation with multiple entities from the UNI campus and beyond. This was a first-of- its-kind experience in both the fields of theatre and spectrum work which garnered significant national recognition and served as a focal point for shifting best practices and changing the thinking about this type of work.

Another hallmark of her work has been high-quality teaching grounded in genuine care for her students. Students consistently indicate how passionate and supportive she is, and that their work with her resulted in substantial growth and learning. She fulfills the spirit of the language found in her teaching philosophy, which emphasizes an approach "grounded in the pursuit of ideas that tackle problems, support others, and engage participants physically, emotionally, creatively, and/or verbally". Her teaching processes have served as a strong example to others in the department.

Professor Berghammer built a high-quality Youth Theatre program over the last two decades. This work included 20 summer productions under the auspices of Sturgis Youth Theatre and countless weekend workshops and school outings which provided opportunities for UNI students to develop into strong (and in-demand) teaching artists.

There is no question that Professor Berghammer's substantial body of work has positively impacted hundreds of UNI students, and - realistically - thousands of K-12 students. For these reasons, her request for Emeritus status is appropriate, and her impressive contributions should be celebrated.

Sincerely,



Eric Lange, Head
Department of Theatre, UNI