

Dear Faculty Senate,

I am writing to support Eric Lange's application to Emeritus Faculty at the University of Northern Iowa.

Eric Lange has been an integral part of TheatreUNI for 29 years, including 20 years as department head. I have known Eric for only the past year, and I have stepped into his role as head of theatre. He has graciously stayed this semester to assist the transition, and also to design lights for *Dracula*, *A Feminist Revenge Fantasy*. Eric has been a wonderful guide and is incredibly knowledgeable about the department, the university, and the wider community. As artistic director of TheatreUNI, he led the theatre through challenging times that disproportionately affected the performing arts. He is kind, supportive, and cares about the success of TheatreUNI and our students, faculty and staff.

I cannot count the number of times I have been told by faculty, staff, and students how much they will miss Eric and how happy they were to work with him. Many of our current faculty and staff asked if they could support Eric's candidacy with a short statement.

Katy McGlaughlin
Production Manager

Eric led the department for 20 years, he was a conscientious steward of the department's finances, and he successfully navigated untold challenges, including the COVID pandemic, which was especially impactful to the performing arts. Eric strives to think outside the box to find creative solutions and he isn't afraid of change even if it means reexamining deeply entrenched systems and assumptions. Eric is an outstanding mentor; he is honest, level-headed, and kind. His patience in working with high-strung, vulnerable artists/colleagues with "creative temperaments" is unparalleled. I've seen many department heads with narrow focus and limited scope create unnecessary strife within their departments by acting as dictators, Eric always makes an effort to see situations from all sides and make decisions with the long-term health of the faculty and department in mind. This is one of the most collegial and functional departments I've ever encountered and Eric is largely responsible for helping create and maintain that atmosphere. Having Eric as an Emeritus Faculty member can only strengthen our department as we adjust to his retirement.

Katrina Sandvik
Adjunct Professor, Theatre

Eric Lange is an exemplary candidate for emeritus status. As faculty and Department Head he is dedicated to both current students and alumni. Speaking as alumni, Eric came to the department after I graduated, but he made it a point to get to know me and my story after graduation. That relationship culminated in him hiring me for special projects and ultimately for my current position. He is deeply invested in our department and our students. Keeping a connection to Eric would be very advantageous for our department.

Susan Conner
Secretary

In the six years I've been at UNI Eric Lange has always gone above and beyond in his service to the Department of Theatre and the University of Northern Iowa. He's worked long hours to make sure every detail got taken care of. His first thought has always been assisting and supporting our students in their learning and growth. As Department Head he met with every prospective theatre student that came to campus. He always looked at the big picture and considered everyone involved. His expertise, high standards for theatre, and genuine pride and concern for the department have been a large contribution in making Theatre UNI the excellent program it is.

Mark Parrott
Associate Professor of Design and Production

Eric Lange has served admirably for the last 28 years, first as a Department of Theatre Technical Director and then as Department Head.

While Eric was the Technical Director he physically had hands on each production mounted by the department. His dedication to students helped to create many professionals in the field. Eric's support of his colleagues began as a professor in the technical production area and when the need came he took the giant leap up to the challenge of leading the department. I have come to appreciate his devotion to leadership. The Department and I have benefited from the trust that he has in his team and the personal care that he has exhibited for each of us. His elevation to Emeritus status is the culmination of an exemplary career.

Neal Jacobs
Adjunct Professor, Theatre

I met Eric when I volunteered to work the Theatre UNI booth at the College Hill Arts Festival. In 2012 I joined the theatre faculty. As head of our department, Eric has so many great leadership traits. He has shown by his actions that we do actually have some kind of control over changes that seem overwhelming, especially during Covid when we had to adapt to the new on-line learning environment. He also sees qualities in people that others may have missed and encourages us to take risks by thinking of new ways to inspire students in the classroom. Finally, he is always aiming to improve the training and quality of faculty. The success of the Strayer-Wood Theatre has been a Cinderella story where audiences have felt they were invited to the ball.

Ron Koizan
Technical Director

In his time as Head of the Department of Theatre Eric Lange consistently demonstrated a dedication both to the mission of the department as well as the needs of both the students and Staff/ Faculty. His consistent modeling of collaboration, both as a Theatre artist and as the department head provided an exemplary example to both students and Faculty/Staff.

Kendra Kahl**Instructor of Youth Theatre**

Eric Lange deeply cares for the students in the Theatre Department as well as other faculty members, and I am sure he will continue to do so. My first year as a faculty member overlapped with Eric's last year as department head, but I never felt that he was 'on the way out.' He continued and continues to strive for excellence, seek accountability, and help realize innovative ways of practicing our craft. Eric has been immensely helpful to me, always willing to assist me so that I may best serve our students. His long service to the university shows his desire to provide stability and strong support to all who walk into our classrooms, rehearsal spaces, audiences, and community events.

Matthew J Weedman**Associate Professor of Theatre**

Over the past ten years I have been privileged to work as a colleague with Eric Lange and I write in support of granting him Emeritus status. As the longest serving Department Head at UNI, Eric has managed this enormously complicated role with equanimity and grace. He has been responsible for not only the day to day management of an academic department, but has also served as the Artistic Director of the Strayer Wood Theatre which involves massive budgets, dealing with an enormous number of guest artists and making sure that the department produces seasons of quality theatre which serves to both train our students for entrance into the profession and to intersect with stakeholders in the community. His service to this university has been honorable, effective and worthy. I advocate for this status in the highest possible terms.

Amy Rohrberg**Associate Professor of Theatre - Costume Design**

Eric Lange has been with the Department of Theatre at UNI for twenty-nine years, nine as Scenic Tech Director, and twenty as department head. As steps down, we support naming him for Emeritus status. Eric has been connected to over 150 productions (in one capacity or another), many staff, adjunct, and faculty new hires or retirements; two departmental reunions, navigating the NAST accreditation process; about a million guest artists for workshops, as actors, designers, directors, writers, choreographers, musical contributors, and on and on. He's helped navigate a number of curricular revisions, several course evaluation (SOA) changes, a leap into Diversity, Inclusion, Belonging, and Respect; many advancements and acquisitions of technology for use in classroom spaces and for productions. Eric's commitment to the department, to the well-being of the students and faculty, to the quality of the production program, to the relevance of our classes and productions, to a continuing vision of what we could become, as opposed to what we are, have been consistent and strong. His dedication to growth and to "being better humans" is always close to the surface. An indelible mark has been stamped on many aspects of this department by Eric Lange's actions and his art. We are proud to have Gorge Glenn, Jay Edelnant, Gretta Berghammer and

others on our list of emeritus faculty for our department. Eric Lange's name should be part of that honored list.

Tange Kole**Department Secretary**

By the time he retires, Eric will have devoted nearly half of his life to the Department of Theatre at UNI. His time here can be summed up in two words: Service and Leadership. Whether teaching in the classroom, instructing developing artists working on productions, or mentoring by example, service has been the guiding principle of Eric's tenure. Of his 29 years at UNI, Eric served as Head of the Theatre Department and Artistic Director for TheatreUNI for 20 years. Throughout that time, his collaborative leadership style remained consistent and encouraged open communication within the department. While decisions usually reflected the consensus of the group involved, they were always guided by the principle of what was in the best interests of the students. As department secretary since 2006, I have worked with Eric on a daily basis for the past 17 years. Besides his wife, I probably know him better than anyone, and I can tell you that although Eric may leave UNI, UNI will never leave Eric. He will carry us in his heart for the rest of his life. If that doesn't deserve emeritus recognition, then I don't know what does.

Thank you for this important process. Eric Lange has been the driving force behind TheatreUNI for many years and we would greatly benefit as a department by having him as Emeritus Faculty.

William Hickman (he/him)

Head of Theatre

Associate Professor, Theatre

Cedar Falls, IA 50614

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