

Dr. Amy Peterson
Chair, Faculty Senate
University of Northern Iowa
Cedar Falls, Iowa 50614

April 2019

Dear Dr. Peterson,

I am writing this letter to support awarding Emeritus status to Dr. Linda Fitzgerald, Professor of Early Childhood Education, Curriculum and Instruction. As a faculty member at UNI for over two decades Dr. Linda Fitzgerald has generously contributed her time, intellect and organizational skills in service to the students and faculty of the University of Northern Iowa and the field of early childhood teacher education. Her strong commitment to excellence is evident in numerous contributions to the College of Education, the Department of Curriculum and Instruction and the early childhood education division. Her many years of service to the early childhood profession has positively impacted the field on international, national, state and local levels. Her numerous contributions make her most deserving of being awarded Emeritus status.

Dr. Fitzgerald has served the College of Education in many ways over the years but most notably as the Coordinator of the Curriculum & Instruction Ed.D. Intensive Study Area from 2010-2016. An illustration of her commitment to the students in the Ed.D. program is that during the spring 2019 semester, her last semester of phased retirement, she spends much of her time working with five doctoral students, mentoring them as they complete their dissertations. Her contributions will endure after her retirement due to the numerous hours she spent updating and developing written policies for admission and advisement that support graduate faculty in their work with doctoral students. From 1997-2011 she served almost continually on the Council for Teacher Education in various roles. Then in 2011 she was elected to represent Early Childhood Education on the newly formed Elementary Education Senate, keeping fellow faculty informed about senate work and seeking their input into decisions, continuing in this service until she stepped down in 2016.

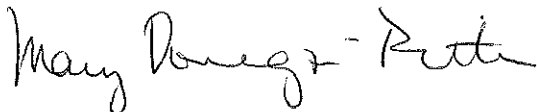
Her commitment to faculty governance is evident in the time and energy she donated on numerous committees. The Curriculum & Instruction department has been well served by Dr. Fitzgerald's active role on the Professional Assessment Committee since 2000 and her leadership as chair from 2014-2017. Committed to continual improvement, her most notable contribution to the Professional Assessment Committee was taking the lead in updating and clarifying PAC procedures. The PAC document she developed was used by former Associate Provost Nancy Cobb as a model for departments across campus. In the Early Childhood Division Dr. Linda Fitzgerald served UNI students as the Faculty Advisor for the Student Early Childhood Association for six years. In this role she mentored undergraduates to develop leadership and advocacy skills and connected them to relevant local experts for their monthly meetings. Her commitment to these future teachers benefits dozens of UNI students from both early

childhood and elementary education. In addition, Dr. Fitzgerald served on recruitment committees and as department advisor for student teachers every year.

An outstanding representative of the University of Northern Iowa, Dr. Linda Fitzgerald has an impressive record of contributions to international, national, state and local groups. She serves on the International Advisory Board for the journal, *Studying Teacher Education*. An active member of the American Education Research Association, she has reviewed numerous annual meeting proposals over the past two decades. She is a peer reviewer for five professional research journals. Her contributions to the state of Iowa are numerous but none more notable than the five-year period in which she served on a statewide committee to develop the Unified Early Childhood Education/Early Childhood Special Education endorsement. This endorsement ensures that Iowa's early childhood teacher education programs are on the cutting edge and surpass the expectations of professional organizations for teaching children from birth to third grade with diverse needs in inclusive setting. Dr. Fitzgerald is well known and respected in the Cedar Valley, serving as the UNI representative and currently as Vice President to the Black Hawk Association for the Education of Young Children Steering and Conference Committee. Her service to local programs began with her contributions to the Regents Center for Early Developmental Education in 1994, and she currently serves on the advisory board. She is well known and respected for her high expectations for UNI teacher education students and she works closely with teachers in Tri-County Head Start, Waterloo Schools and Cedar Falls Schools classrooms, to provide on-site supervision to UNI students, without any additional compensation.

In her retirement Dr. Fitzgerald plans to continue to generously serve the University of Northern Iowa through her work with doctoral students and to support the Regents Center for Early Developmental Education. Her strong work ethic, sharp intellect and willingness to take on complex projects will not be easy to replace. For these reasons I enthusiastically support Dr. Linda Fitzgerald to receive Emeritus status.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Mary Donegan-Ritter".

Mary Donegan-Ritter, Ph. D.
Associate Professor, Curriculum and Instruction
Interim Department Head, Department of Teaching