

Nov. 20, 2018

Dear Senate Chair Petersen

I am writing to document the longstanding and meritorious contributions of Dr. James Davis, who, upon his retirement, seeks Emeritus Status.

Dr. Davis joined the Department of Languages and Literatures at UNI in 2003. He brought with him extensive experience as a teacher in both high school and university settings. The breadth of his knowledge as a teacher was equally matched by his involvement in the Iowa Writing Project, a grant-funded program that Dr. Davis has directed at UNI for the last 15 years. Dr. Davis has taught numerous writing classes to UNI students, and has been instrumental in training both future and current teachers in the art and skill of teaching writing.

In the words of one of his former students, Lauren Petri, “My pedagogical roots found fertile soil in the Iowa Writing Project... The veteran educators around me were brilliant and I filled my notebook with their words.: ‘If we want other educators to be receptive to our ideas, we need to respect them and recognize what they do well. Provide students with space and time to develop an enjoyment of reading and writing.”

Not only has Dr. Davis impacted countless students in their development as teachers, he is also active on the national level in his administration of the Iowa Writing Project (linked to the larger National Writing Project), and as an member of the National Council of Teachers of English.

In all his roles his strengths stem from a vast knowledge of language arts pedagogy (the central topic of one of the graduate courses he designed, titled “Milestones,” that studies the history of language arts teaching in the U.S.), but also in his capacity to teach reflectively, and to engage learners in their own process of reflection. This, in turn, leads teachers in training to be aware of the impact of their craft on their future students.

Needless to say, I highly recommend bestowing the honor of Emeritus Status on Dr. James Davis, and I appreciate his commitment to our students, our department, the university, and the greater community. We, and schools across the state, will continue to reap the benefits of his contributions for many years to come.

Sincerely,



Jennifer Cooley, Ph.D.  
Professor of Spanish and Head  
Department of Languages and Literatures