

Department of Languages & Literatures

March 4, 2022

Dear Members of the Faculty Senate:

I am writing in support of Dr. William N. Koch's application for emeritus status following his retirement at the end of the semester. During his twenty-three years as an adjunct instructor at UNI, Dr. Koch has been a dedicated teacher, a much-valued colleague and a committed university citizen.

Dr. Koch has taught a range of courses for the Department of Languages & Literatures (and for the Department of English prior to that) including Designing Proposals and Walt Whitman and his Contemporaries, but the primary course he has offered has been the introductory composition course that currently is titled College Writing and Research. It is for that class that he developed his textbook for college-level writing and reading, *Writing and Research for College: The Structures of Imaginative Literacy*. In that book, as in his teaching overall, Dr. Koch deploys a pedagogy that asks students to consider big questions and to be precise in the language they use to discuss them. As I noted when I last observed his teaching, this approach "has the advantage of training students to become attuned to how wording decisions shape the way that a text is received by a reader."

Though scholarship is not part of Dr. Koch's required portfolio, in his published critical work he has engaged with the ideas and writings of figures ranging from Northrup Frye and Mark Van Doren to Arthur C. Clarke. In addition, his most distinctive creative contribution has been his work as a Walt Whitman re-enactor whereby he has envisioned performances where he plays the part of Whitman (often growing his beard out ahead of time), maintaining character while engaging with audiences and reading works by one of America's most influential poets. I'm pleased that he will be able to offer a valedictory performance in April.

Finally, as a department head, I particularly appreciate Dr. Koch's sense of university citizenship. He has been a member of the Faculty Senate, has represented adjunct faculty for United Faculty, and he is a reliable participant in university events. Last year, he was able to offer a Capstone class titled "The Idea of the University," and I thought of this as a kind of capstone of his teaching, as he is someone who, throughout his career, has given a lot of attention to what exactly a university aims to accomplish for all of us who have dedicated a portion of our lives to such institutions.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,



Dr. Jim O'Loughlin
Department Head and Professor