

29 March 2022

Dear colleagues:

I am writing in support of Dr. Christian Ogbondah's appointment to emeritus faculty. Dr. Ogbondah has a long and distinguished record of publications, his writing and service have had a global impact advancing journalism and democracy, and he has been an outstanding teacher at UNI for over 30 years.

Dr. Ogbondah has been remarkably consistent in his scholarly production for almost 40 years; as a result, he has published a truly impressive amount of both traditional scholarship and journalism. Dr. Ogbondah has published three books, has another forthcoming, and has authored dozens of academic essays published as journal articles and book chapters. Across his career, he has presented his research in nearly 400 conference presentations. As an internationally recognized expert on journalism, Dr. Ogbondah applies the theoretical expertise from his research to the production of journalism. Thus, his practice of journalism is a form of scholarship of engagement. In this endeavor, his output is truly staggering; he has published over 3,000 articles in newspapers throughout the United States and across the world.

Dr. Ogbondah has not only produced an incredible amount of scholarship, he has produced work that is of the highest academic merit. UNI recently recognized the quality of Dr. Ogbondah's work by awarding him the 2022 Distinguished Scholar Award. In 2009, he received the Regents' Award for Faculty Excellence, which honored his excellence in research, teaching, and service. Throughout his career, the many other academic and professional communities of which he is a member have provided him with opportunities for scholarship and service because of the quality of his work. Within the United States, he has been selected as a fellow of the American Press Institute and American Society of Newspaper Editors, and has been primary or co-investigator on a number of grant projects funded by institutions including USAID, the Ford Foundation, the MacArthur Foundation. In total, these projects have been awarded nearly \$2 million. Internationally, he has received numerous awards and honors. He was selected for the Scholar Achievement Award from the United Arab Emirates University and Ambassador of Press Freedom for the Premium Times Center for Investigative Journalism. His work on the role of journalism in democratic reforms has been published and circulated by Freedom House, a prominent international watchdog organization. In 2021, Dr. Ogbondah was invited by the Nigerian Press Institute to present to serve as a resource to journalists in the country focused on democratic reform. His impact as a scholar of and advocate for the role of a healthy press in democratic reform is a tremendous professional legacy of both scholarship and service.

Dr. Ogbondah has accomplished all of this while remaining a dedicated teacher to multiple generations of UNI students. He has taught over 20 different courses at the university at the undergraduate and graduate level. To each of these courses he brings his tremendous expertise,

as well as a deep commitment preparing his students professionally while also caring about them as people. This dedication to students has led him to receive multiple teaching awards throughout his time at UNI. It has also helped his students to go on to accomplished careers as journalists across the state, country, and globe. He has also been a tremendous teacher and advocate for international students in our department and across the university. Beyond the classroom, he has provided numerous workshops and presentations to support international undergraduate and graduate students at UNI. I know he plans to spend his time as emeritus faculty continuing to provide training to journalists and journalism students.

In sum, Dr. Ogbondah has been a model of excellence in research, service, and teaching throughout his career at UNI. He has also been a truly wonderful colleague to me and everyone in our department; he is kind, generous, and always deeply humane.

I strongly support his application for emeritus professor.

Sincerely,

Ryan McGeough, Ph.D.
Department Head
Department of Communication and Media
University of Northern Iowa