
12 April 2021

John Vallentine, Associate Provost for Faculty
John Burnight, Chair, Faculty Senate

Greetings!

I write in support of Michael Prael's request for emeritus status.

Michael was hired in October 1988. He began his teaching career at UNI stepping in for a faculty member in the middle of a semester, receiving a phone call on Friday, and teaching Humanities the following Monday. Michael then taught Humanities I, II, and III for the History and Languages & Literatures departments, and introductory philosophy and humanities courses for the Philosophy & World Religions department until the end of 2020.

Humanities courses are difficult to teach. They require broad knowledge of Western history, from the beginnings of human civilization up to our contemporary situation in the U.S. Many faculty only teach one of the courses in the Humanities sequence directly related in some way to their area of academic expertise. Michael developed the expertise to teach all three Humanities courses. He taught thousands of students, in small and large sections, for many years, challenging them to read difficult texts and improve their writing. In evaluations of his courses, students regularly commented on his passion for the subjects he taught, his ability to keep them engaged in the material, and his offbeat sense of humor.

Dr. Jerry Soneson, the previous PWR department head, wrote the following in support of Michael's request:

"Michael Prael has been an adjunct for UNI for over 30 years. He was teaching both Humanities and the Introduction to Philosophy for our department when I came to UNI, but in recent years, he has been teaching Humanities, I, II and III. Whether instructing large or small sections of Humanities, Mike's teaching has been exemplary. He covered not only the history of the West, but philosophy, religion, literature and art in that history, and he did all this in an integrated and compelling fashion. Equally important, he was always willing to take on another section, even at the last minute, which sometimes happens, and he would do this with a smile and with gratitude. Because of his generosity and excellence in teaching, he clearly deserves, I believe, emeritus status, which is a professional way of thanking him for his dedicated service in well over 3 decades."

I concur wholeheartedly with Dr. Soneson that Michael Prahl's years of dedicated service to UNI are worthy of emeritus status.

Sincerely,

Susan E. Hill

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