
11 March 2024

Dear Members of the Faculty Senate:

I am writing in support of Vince Gotera's request for emeritus status at the University of Northern Iowa. He has been a celebrated and prolific poet who has helped to shape a generation of student writers during his time at UNI. As an apt capstone to his career, Vince has recently been named the next Poet Laureate of Iowa, a two-year term that begins this spring.

The breadth of Vince's work has been remarkable. During his career, he has published hundreds of poems and collections that range from interrogations of veterans' trauma to explorations of his complex ties to his parents to his current work-in-progress, a retelling of Filipino folktales involving the mythological *Aswang* set during the last century. He has also published a critical book, *Radical Visions: Poetry by Vietnam Veterans*.

Vince has been an exemplary literary citizen. As an editor at the *North American Review* and *Star*Line* (the journal of the Science Fiction Poetry Association) he has regularly championed new work, and, at the University of Northern Iowa, he has been recognized with a Regents Award for Faculty Excellence, the highest award in the Iowa public university system. He also regularly participates in the Iowa Summer Writing Festival.

As a publisher, I have twice worked with Vince to publish collections through Final Thursday Press, a regional press focusing on Iowa writers. His 2003 chapbook, *Ghost Wars*, was the inaugural publication of the press, and it won the Global Filipino Literary Award in Poetry. More recently, we worked together on Vince's chapbook, *The Coolest Month*, a compilation of his best poems written as part of National Poetry Writing Month (NaPoWriMo).

Formally, Vince is best known for working with received forms and even, as in the case of the Hay(na)ku, first naming them. Over the years, I've come to appreciate that he finds formal limitations to be productive rather than restrictive. His poems use form as a way of shaping experience and narrowing down language choices. I often find that his poems so carefully describe scenes and emotions that I initially forget that he is not

writing in free verse. Of course, some of his most memorable poems also play with forms, as in the clever use of Abcedarians or in his mic drop slam-style retelling of Sir Gawain and the Green Knight, “Gawain’s Rap”

As head of the Department of Languages & Literatures, I annually review Vince’s work, and, I recently nicknamed the last few years as the “Goteraissance.” During the years of pandemic, he channeled his efforts into this poetry, publishing 37 poems during the 2021- 2022 academic year and topping that with 43 publications in 2022-23. All the while, he participates frequently in live and Zoom readings both solo and in combination with other writers.

In the classroom, Vince is known for his creative innovations, such as the sculptures he creates out of desks that poetry writing students are then asked to describe. Throughout his career, Vince has offered dozens of courses including mainstays in our creative writing program as well as literature courses including Multicultural Literature and Asian American Literature. I’m appreciative that at the end of his career, Vince was willing to pilot a new course in Speculative Poetry and Fiction, which has drawn a lot of student interest.

As the longtime coordinator of the Creative Writing section, Vince has worked regularly to support and revise the department’s most popular minor. He has also been the faculty advisor for the annual student writing publication, *Inner Weather*, successfully shepherding that publication through the challenging period of the pandemic.

Throughout it all, Vince has remained an active and influential member of the department and a pleasure to work with as a colleague. His contributions to Languages & Literatures will be much missed and difficult to replace, and I look forward to seeing how he makes the position of Iowa Poet Laureate his own over the next few years.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jim O'Loughlin". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Department Head