



November 23, 2021

UNI Faculty Senate
Dr. John Burnight, Chair
Re: Request for Emerita Status for Dr. Betty Zan

Dear Dr. Burnight and Faculty Senators,

I am writing in support of Dr. Betty Zan's request for emerita faculty status following her retirement from UNI this fall semester.

Dr. Zan has served well in the Early Childhood Education Division in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction in addition to her service as Assistant Director and Director of the Iowa Regents' Center for Early Developmental Education (IRCEDE). Within these roles, Dr. Zan successfully wrote many grant proposals to conduct research on early STEM. One grant, Ramps & Pathways, was funded by the National Science Foundation and resulted in two books, numerous journal articles, and frequent requests for speaking at universities across the globe. As Director of the IRCEDE, she secured a grant from NASA to organize and hold the *STEM in Early Education and Development (SEED) Conference* at UNI. This conference brought together renown early childhood and science teachers, administrators, professional development designers, teacher educators, science consultants, researchers, curriculum developers, policy experts, authors, representatives of state departments of education and science museum professionals. Together they explored critical issues facing the field of early childhood science education, to discuss and share work in classrooms and other settings, share research on teaching and learning, and in professional development. At the end of the conference, the group set an agenda for moving the field forward. Just one result of this conference was the formation of the National Association for the Education of Young Children's (NAEYC) Early Childhood Interest Forum. This group collaborated to write the National Science Teaching Association's (NSTA) Early Childhood Science Education Position Statement – a document written so well; it was adopted by NAEYC within the year.

On a personal note, Dr. Zan played a major role in the establishment of my career at UNI. As an early childhood teacher in the Laurens-Marathon Community School District, I began working with Dr. Zan in my development as a constructivist educator. Dr. Zan traveled 300 miles to my school many times to observe my work, taking copious notes and then debriefing me on what she observed at the end of a day. My growth as an educator led to taking a position at UNI in 2001. Because of her continued support and leadership, I am able to continue to build upon Dr. Zan's work as the current Director of the IRCEDE. I am forever grateful for her leadership and support, and trust that you will honor her request for emerita status.

Sincerely,

Beth D. Van Meeteren
Director, Iowa Regents' Center for Early Developmental Education

