



THE UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA'S

COLLEGE AT WISE

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Dr. Melinda Kellogg: Consideration for Pre-Tenure.

Letter of Support

I am pleased to write this letter of support for Melinda (Mindy) Kellogg, in her efforts to gain a positive pre-tenure review.

I have known Mindy for the full term of her employment, as an assistant professor of physics, in the Department of Natural Sciences at Uva-Wise. Traditionally, a letter of support would consider Mindy's effectiveness across the three perceived spheres of activity expected of academic faculty - teaching, service, and scholarship. I consider that this core of expectations is assessed far better by our Department Chair, Dr. Jansen. However, what I can provide is some sense of Dr. Kellogg's significance to the broad mission of the Department, and those aspects of her work that are particularly laudable.

When first employed, Mindy was the third physicist hired in her position within the previous seven years. The reasons for that rate of turnover are complex and multifaceted, but Mindy's hire very much represented a hope of stability and program development. The role of physics in the Department has always been 'schizophrenic' - to serve the majority of students for whom physics is a required course, rather than a subject of interest, and to develop a cadre of students whose fascination with physics is genuine, and whose academic development would support the hire of further physics faculty, and lay groundwork for development of a Major/Co-Major in Physics.

Mindy has performed a truly outstanding task in balancing the divergent tasks expected, and indeed imposed on her. Her teaching at the 'lower' levels has directly supported all parts of the Department, and has been accomplished competently and graciously, despite the frequently crippling overloads it has imposed. With the subsequent hire of Dr. Undreiu, Mindy has used her increased freedom to develop a new depth to the offerings in Physics, and the teaching I have directly observed at the upper-level has shown her true depth of intellect, and uncommon ability to inspire students in areas of physics that clearly excite Mindy, herself. Perhaps her most impressive accomplishment has been the recent submission of a grant to NSF, which seeks to build a physics facility that would be of remarkable sophistication for a college of this size.

In summary, I consider that Mindy fully deserves a positive pre-tenure review for all her work to date. She is a physicist whose background and expertise we are lucky to have acquired, and whose potential to the Department of Natural Sciences is exciting and tangible. I hope, that in the next three years, Mindy will relish her status as the 'senior' physicist, and lead the creation of a comprehensive, interactive, and cross-disciplinary program in Physics.

Dr. Kevin Jones
Associate Professor of Biology