

Personal Statement of Trisha Weeks
Review and Promotion Application
University of Utah

November, 2018

Dear Review Committee-

Since returning to the University of Utah as career line faculty member, I have enjoyed opportunities to teach courses, develop curriculum, mentor students, serve on department and university committees, and provide service in the community. Details of these activities are outlined below.

Teaching

Since my graduation, I have taught a number of undergraduate courses for the University of Utah. These include

Psy 1010: Introductory Psychology (on campus and online)

Psy 2010: Psychology as a Career and a Science

Psy 3000: Statistical Methods in Psychology (on campus and online)

Psy 3010: Research Methods (on campus and online)

Psy 3220 Child & Adolescent Development (fall 2013)

Psy 3320 Science and Practice of Clinical Psychology

Psy 3440 Personality Theory

My current contract specifies that I teach large and very large courses. I have adapted my campus version of Psy 1010 to accommodate over 300 students, and I regularly teach about 100 students in my campus courses of Psy 2010, 3000, and 3010. Since returning to the University of Utah, I have also worked with Rebekah Grow and TLT to acquire techniques and strategies to increase the effectiveness of my online teaching, as I am doing an increasing amount of online instruction. This semester, I've enjoyed teaching two relatively smaller courses at the department's request: Personality Theory, and Clinical Psychology.

Although I am not a Clinical Psychologist, I was happy to fill in when another faculty member was unable to teach Psy 3320 this term. I have a Master's Degree (and hold a clinical license) in Marriage and Family Therapy, and have been open with the students about the limits of my knowledge and differences in my training. Sommer Thorgusen has graciously made herself available to students to answer questions that I can't.

Curriculum Development

I was invited by the department to develop the Generation 2 online course for Introductory Psychology in the summer of 2017. I spent the summer and fall terms of that year getting the course ready to go. I am proud of that course. Knowing of the growing demand for online courses, and how big the in-person sections of introductory psychology are getting to be, I designed it to accommodate a large number of students. Rubrics for the written assignments can be adjusted so that grading goes more quickly (for a larger number of students), or so that

more in-depth feedback is provided (smaller student to TA/Instructor ratio). Further, concerned with the rising costs of textbooks, I designed the course using open-source textbooks. The semester we launched, it was the fourth highest course in terms of student-interactions across the University.

In addition to developing the 1010 online course, the specific courses I teach and my service on the undergraduate committee have placed me in a position to look at and update curriculum on a broader level. Specifically, the opportunity to teach students throughout the entire 1010/2010/3000/3010 sequence has given me a unique grasp of student development through the major, and of issues surrounding knowledge transfer between courses. This perspective has allowed me to identify weaknesses in student development, and to think about ways to address those weaknesses that go beyond a particular course. For instance, one of the frustrations of teaching 3010 (research methods, with an intensive writing component), is the variability in student writing ability. Some students enter 3010 seemingly unable to even summarize a scientific passage or find appropriate research articles. In fall term of 2017, I experimented with adding an annotated bibliography as a required element of my Psy 2010 course. It went well enough that Paul White and I have decided to make this part of the curriculum for Psy 2010, and are also investigating the feasibility of adding a literature review. I've pushed to sharpen the curriculum in 2010, so that students come to their upper division courses, including research methods, with more practice in finding, summarizing, and synthesizing research articles.

I am concerned about the transfer of knowledge between courses. Teaching the Psy 3000 and 3010 (stats and methods) sequence, I have seen first hand how much students lose in terms of their grasp of statistics over semester breaks (and sometimes over several terms). My current strategy includes re-teaching some of the critical stats concepts in the methods course (see my statement on teaching philosophy). However, I am also thinking about techniques and changes I can make in my statistics course to help students retain what they learn, and plan to test some of those ideas in Psy 3000 this upcoming Spring term.

Student Mentoring

Although I am not formally involved in mentoring graduate students, my involvement with undergraduate students has been gratifying. Over the past three years, I have written scores of letters of recommendation for students applying to various graduate programs and scholarships. I regularly have students drop by my office hours or make appointments to talk with me about possible career paths, or ask advice about how to get research experience, how to negotiate the major, or other aspects of life. Once in a while, I also get students in crisis.

I imagine that most of the tenure track faculty spend their time mentoring the graduate and undergraduate students who are involved in their research labs. I do not have a research lab, yet find myself with plenty of mentoring opportunities. I believe students approach me because I try to learn their names, even in the large classes (although my success rate on this is probably only about 60%), and because I introduce myself to them every semester, and tell them that I want them to know my background so that they will know what kinds of questions I can answer for them, and what I can't answer. I also think that having a lot of student consultations may be a function of teaching Psy 2010 in person, where I spend a lot of time urging students to get involved in research, make connections with faculty, and figure out a

career plan. It turns out that if you harp on that enough, students actually come to you when they need help figuring it out.

The University of Utah can feel like a big place. Having a human connection is important. I've been pleased to be someone students can connect with, and to be someone who can help them make critical connections with others.

Service

As I mentioned, I have loved serving on the undergraduate committee these past two years. I have been able to contribute in a variety of ways to the committee, and have enjoyed assignments such as helping to assess learning outcomes, review scholarship applications, and participating in a variety of other projects the committee has undertaken. One project I am especially proud of is the Teaching in Psychology canvas course I helped to create for the department. During the summer of 2017, at the request of the Undergraduate Committee, Kristina Oldroyd and I put together the course as a repository of information for incoming instructors. Since that time, I've been tasked with keeping the course current. I feel like this is a helpful resource for new graduate student and new faculty instructors alike.

Beginning in the Fall of 2017, I have been serving on the University's Senate Advisory Committee on Information and Technology. The SACIT meets about once a month, sometimes less, to discuss and advise on issues of IT. Although IT is not my forté, I have regularly attended and participated on the committee, mostly in a "watch and learn" role.

In December of 2017, I was approached by a friend who mentors elementary school principals for Granite School District. Mr. Douglas asked me if I would come and talk to him and his colleagues about ways to help the principals manage angry parents. Drawing on my knowledge of emotional regulation, child and adult development, and my clinical background in Marriage and Family Therapy, I designed and presented three workshops to the mentors and elementary school principals of Granite School District on interpersonal skills and dealing with anger. Mr. Douglas and I have talked about the possibility of holding another, follow up workshop in the next few months.

I really enjoy teaching at the University of Utah. I like the congenial atmosphere, new challenges, and opportunities it affords. I enjoy serving on the undergraduate committee, and feeling as though I am contributing in meaningful ways to the department. I also really enjoy the students. This is a scrappy, loveable population of students who are working hard to get an education and maintain their balance in a demanding life phase with all sorts of developmental challenges. I am not a native to Utah, but I've been here long enough to love the people here, and particularly the students. It makes teaching here fun.