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Narrative for Promotion to Full Professor

Since joining the faculty in the Department of First-Year and Transition Studies in 2011, I have been fortunate to engage in myriad professional development and scholarly activities that have strengthened my pedagogical approaches to teaching and my expertise in the emergent discipline of first-year studies. It is through these experiences that I have sought to achieve greater depth, scope, and quality in all areas of my work. Concurrently, through mentoring (students, other faculty, and staff in my department), and collaborating with other scholars (at the university, across the state, nationally, and internationally), I have strived to make lasting contributions to my discipline, the university, and my home department.

Over the last three years, I have become increasingly focused on identifying the intersections between my teaching and scholarship, which ultimately, has allowed me to create opportunities for students to become deeply engaged and involved in their own learning. Many of the ways in which I engage students—often through collaboration and active interdisciplinary inquiry and discourse—mirror the approaches I take in my research and practice. The pedagogies that have emerged as a result of this focus have been integrated into the classes I teach, and many have been adopted by other faculty who teach the first-year seminar courses in my home department, as well as faculty at other institutions (TSM 3, 19-28, PS 33-48).

As the remainder of this narrative and the supporting documentation will demonstrate, during my tenure at Kennesaw State University, I have purposefully sought opportunities to advance my teaching, scholarship, and service—the three areas in which I am evaluated—and contribute to advancing my disciplinary expertise, and the recognition thereof as well as the

recognition of the university in local, national, and international arenas (PS 1). It is for these reasons that I have elected to submit my portfolio for early consideration for full professor.

Teaching, Supervising, and Mentoring of Students (TSM)

It was in graduate school, that I discovered what would become the foundation of my teaching philosophy: active and engaging teaching and learning. Consistent with this philosophy, I strive to create an environment where students will think more deeply, and ultimately, more critically. Experiential exercises engage my students and encourage them to apply the ideas and concepts learned in the class. For example, in my Spring 2013 KSU 1111 class (TSM 1), I used the activity, “Balance of Power” (TSM 2) with my students and guests from Kansai University of International Studies, including the university’s president. The activity allowed my students to apply knowledge related to Global Challenge 2: Resource Management to make decisions, from multiple perspectives, about building a water storage dam. Recently, the faculty at Kansai decided to universally use the activity to serve as a model for discussion in their first-year seminar classes (TSM 3).

In KSU 1111 as well as the other courses I teach, I seek not only to provide opportunities to actively engage my students in their learning; I also attempt to both challenge and support them. As evidence of this philosophy, I have provided teaching evaluations from Fall 2010 (one AFYS 101 class taught at the University of South Carolina Aiken [TSM 4]), Fall 2011 (KSU 1101 [TSM 5]), Spring 2012 (KSU 1101 and KSU 1111 [TSM 6]), Fall 2012 (KSU 1111 and KSU 1101 [TSM 7]), Spring 2013 (KSU 1111 [TSM 8]), Fall 2013 (KSU 1111, KSU 2290, and KSU 1101 [TSM 9]), and Spring 2014 (KSU 2290 [TSM 10]). A few of the comments illustrate the reaction of the students to my approach. For example, “It encouraged me to think, and to think in a way that did not just involve myself, but to think critically as a global citizen” (TSM

7), while another said “Interesting content, that I'm glad I got to learn more about. It was relative to my life, and our world” (TSM 7). About class discussions, one student said, “She was great at bringing out discussion questions and tried her hardest to get us all to interact” (TSM 7).

Student comments, both positive and negative, have encouraged professional growth and development in my teaching. As a result of student feedback, I made changes to my classes to increase rigor through the introduction of sequenced assignments. For example, in the Global Village Project (TSM 11), students choose a character and country, and through a series of eight discussion board postings, they introduce the character and examine the interaction between the character, his or her country, and each of the Global Challenges. The project culminates with the preparation of an annotated bibliography and poster presentations of the research. Furthermore, I began encouraging greater levels of student participation in class discussions by layering course content, which involved moving some course content online and creating interdependence between both the content I was teaching in class and the information online. Despite these changes, I do acknowledge that there is still room for improvement, as the evaluations for my hybrid KSU 1101 class in Fall 2012, my 7-week online KSU 1101 in Fall 2013, and my KSU 1111 class in Fall 2013 suggest (TSM 7 and 9).

In addition to using student feedback as I endeavor to become more effective, I have also invited peer evaluation of my teaching. Deborah Mixson-Brookshire, Interim Assistant Dean and University College Distance Learning Director observed my KSU 1101 (TSM 12), and indicated that my class “offer[ed] a variety of engaging and rigorous assignments that not only meet the course objectives, but allow the students the opportunity to think critically and reflect on their own experiences. It is evident in the interactions with her students that she cares and has a vested interest in their success.” Furthermore, I have sought several professional development

opportunities to continuously improve my teaching; including completing the Online Learning (formerly SLOAN) Consortium's Online Teaching Certificate with Certification in Design and Delivery (TSM 13).

Moreover, I have also continued to challenge myself by developing and teaching new courses. In Spring 2013, I developed the online KSU 1111 master course; the course was reviewed by faculty who determined that it passed the KSU Quality Matters (QM) review process on first review with the highest possible score (TSM 14-16). Additionally, I have developed and co-teach a section of KSU 2290 for transfer students (TSM 17) in the first transfer learning community offered at the university, "Flourishing at KSU." Furthermore, I collaborated with Karen Andrews, Executive Director of Career Services, to create a section of KSU 2290 focused on sophomore career exploration (TSM 18). Both courses were reviewed and approved by the Curriculum Committee for the Department of First-Year and Transition Studies.

Over the last several years, I have had an opportunity to develop and teach courses offered online to national and international audiences. Since 2010, I have taught five sections of *Fostering First-Year Student Success*, an online course I developed for the National Resource Center for the First-Year Experience and Students in Transition®. This course is the longest running, boasts the largest attendance of all the online course offerings through the Center, and includes faculty and staff participants from colleges and universities around the world (TSM 19-27; PS 1). The demand for the 2014 offering of the course was so great that I was asked to teach a second class in early Fall 2014 (TSM 28). I also teach courses in Student Development Theory, advising and counseling, and the contemporary college student in the Higher Education Administration (HEA) master's and certificate programs at Stony Brook University (TSM 29-35). The aforementioned online courses for graduate students, and faculty and staff have

provided vital online teaching experience that has helped me prepare to coordinate and teach in the forthcoming Master of Science in First-Year Studies graduate program.

Research and Creative Activity (RCA)

As described in my FPA (Binder 1), RCA comprises 20% of my workload, and my most recent annual review indicates I am exceeding this expectation. Since August 2013, I have collaborated with nine colleagues at KSU and across the country to produce eight peer-reviewed publications that have been published or have been accepted for publication (RCA 1-2, 8, 11, 12-13, 20-21, 25, 27, 28-29). Although the focus of each work is different—all represent the alignment of my research emphasis and teaching philosophy—culminating in an investigation of student engagement and learning in different forums. I recently served as the lead author for a book chapter, “Focusing on the Forgotten: An Examination of the Influences and Innovative Practices that Affect Community College Transfer Student Success” which will be published in 2015 in the book, *Examining the Impact of Community Colleges on the Global Workforce* (RCA 1-2). My current research on the transfer student transition and self-authorship resulted in three notable scholarly collaborations, including the grant proposal, *Strengthening Bridges for Student Success: Increasing Transfer & Completion Rates for Underrepresented, Underprepared, & Low-Income Community and Technical College Students Seeking Four-Year Degree*, for over 3.5 million dollars that I co-authored and was submitted to the Fund for the Improvement of Post-Secondary Education—First in the World Initiative (FIPSE-FITW) (RCA 3). As well as two other grant proposals for an original study of transfer student self-authorship that were funded externally by two professional organizations (RCA 4-7). My current research on transfer student self-authorship has the potential to fill a gap in the existing transfer student literature as there are no published studies on this topic.

College students in transition, are the focus of the recent article, “Supporting Students in Transition: An Examination of Sophomore, Transfer, and Senior Transitions and Opportunities for Residence Life and Housing Professionals,” (RCA 8) that I co-authored for *The Journal of College and University Student Housing*. I also served as the lead author on *College Students in Transition: An Annotated Bibliography* (RCA 9), a book published in the Fall 2013 by the National Resource Center for The First-Year Experience and Students in Transition®. The book was reviewed by several leading scholars and practitioners in the discipline of First-Year Studies who have offered endorsements of this work (RCA 10), including: “An excellent primer on the extant research findings to justify efforts expended to support students in transition,” and “This publication must be the first stop for anyone interested in the research and scholarship on college student transitions beyond the first year.”

I have also had an opportunity to continue to examine critical inquiry and learning through several research projects with faculty colleagues at the University of South Carolina Aiken. In 2014, I was the first author on the article, *Assessing Deep Learning: Using a Portfolio to Evaluate Gains in Critical Inquiry Among First-Year Students* (RCA 11), and the case study (to be published in 2015), “Think DEEP: A Critical Inquiry Program for First-Year Students” (RCA 12-13). In 2012, I was the first author on the paper, “Exploratory Learning Through Critical Inquiry: Survey of Critical Inquiry Programs at Mid-Sized U.S. Universities” (RCA 14-15). This paper extended earlier research on critical inquiry published in “An Exploratory Investigation of Business Education Critical Inquiry Programs and the Creation of a Related Faculty Development Agenda,” which was published in the *Proceedings for the 10th Global Conference on Business and Economics* and presented at the association’s annual conference in Rome, Italy (RCA 16-19).

Research collaborations with my current colleagues at KSU have yielded work that examines student learning and engagement in online and hybrid (or blended) courses. In 2014, I published a co-authored article, “Enhancing Learning with Technology: Applying the Findings from a Study of Students in Online, Blended, and Face-to-Face First-Year Seminar Classes” in *Currents in Teaching and Learning* (RCA 20-21), which describes results from a multi-year study that examined the perceived impact of instructional tools used in blended and online first-year seminars on student learning and engagement in the course. The article also presents “A Model of Student Learning and Engagement in Online and Blended Courses,” a model I co-authored.

My other recently published scholarship, as well as scholarship in review, further represents my commitment to student engagement, but in other forms and settings. In 2010, I was the single author on the article, “Using Student Narratives to Understand the Impact of First-Year Seminar Participation,” (RCA 22). In 2009, I received the Outstanding Research Award (RCA 23) from NODA (Association for Orientation, Transition, and Retention in Higher Education) for the study described in this article. I applied the findings of this study to identify classroom practices and pedagogies that influenced students’ perceptions of learning and engagement in the first-year seminar in the single-authored article, “High Impact, High Engagement: Designing First-Year Seminar Activities to Promote Learning and Application” (RCA 24). Finally, I have recently drawn on the findings in this study related to active and engaging classroom practices, in the article, “Learning to Leap: Using Experiential Education and Collaborative Learning to Enhance Student Perceptions of Self-Confidence in the First-Year Seminar” (RCA 25) that I co-authored.

Another area of focus for my recent scholarship reflects my interest in learning community participation and student engagement. To that end, I have co-authored the article, “Investigating What Makes Students Thrive: A Learning Community Dedicated to Helping Students Maintain a State Scholarship” (RCA 26) (currently in review), “Applying TLC (A Targeted Learning Community) to Transform Teaching and Learning in Science” (RCA 27), published in the *Journal of Learning Communities Research and Practice*, and “The Targeted Learning Community: A Comprehensive Approach to Promoting the Success of First-Year Students in General Chemistry (a case study accepted for publication in 2015) (RCA 28-29).

In addition to my recent refereed publications, I have also made a total of 29 refereed presentations at national, international, and regional conferences since 2008 (RCA 30-58). Most markedly, I have presented and co-presented several different versions (based on the conference focus and composition) of “College Students in Transition: New Directions in Research and Practice” (RCA 35-40). These presentations are based on my aforementioned research (RCA 9-10), and have been presented at various national and international conference.

Furthermore, since 2011, I have applied for 13 internal and external grants (totaling more than \$3.6 million [RCA 3, 4-5, 6-7, and 59-68]), and five internal incentive awards (RCA 69-76). I received each of the internal incentive awards for which I applied, including the University College Faculty Development Award in 2012 and 2014 (RCA 73-76), and global activity funding which supported my travel to present at the 2013 International Conference on The First-Year Experience (RCA 71).

Finally, I have authored and co-authored several other non-referred publications and reports, including two chapters in the first-year seminar textbook: *Foundations of Academic Inquiry* (5th and 6th editions [RCA 77-80]), the *Foundations of Excellence – Transfer Focus*

Report (RCA 81), Focusing on First-Year Student Success: New and Emerging Trends and Practices for Student and Academic Affairs Staff and Faculty (FYE Update 2012 [RCA 82-83]), the Think DEEP: QEP Report (RCA 84-85), and the Skinny On College Success Instructor's Manual (RCA 86).

Professional Service (PS)

Professional service constitutes 30% of my workload, as described in my FPA (Binder 1), and my annual reviews (Binder 1) indicate that I am exceeding this expectation. In the area of service to the university, I am a Quality Matters (QM) Reviewer (PS 2), and as such, I review and evaluate undergraduate and graduate-level courses across the disciplines to determine if they “meet” the eight QM standards. Since 2012, I have evaluated 20 courses. I also currently serve on the KSU High Impact Practices (HIPs) Team (PS 3), and in this role, I participated in a four-day summer HIPs Institute hosted by the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, contributed to the development and presentation of the campus inventory and HIPs campus action plan (PS 4), and I have helped to plan (and execute) a HIPs faculty meeting (PS 5) and a HIPs faculty learning community. My service to the university has also included participation in the following: Expanded Consolidation Implementation Committee (ECIC); Graduate Program Curricular Committee (GPCC); Library Faculty Advisory Committee; Retention, Persistence, Working Group for the Strategic Enrollment Plan Committee; and Retention, Progression, and Graduation Operational Working Group (OWG) (PS 6-10). Additionally, I serve as a “Campus Coach” (faculty mentor) to undergraduate student athletes (PS 11).

In the area of service to University College, as an appointed member of the College's Distance Learning Committee, I develop and present two faculty workshops (one per semester)

(PS 12-16), and create “DLC Tips” for the UC Newsletter. I have also developed and presented several invited workshops for students in the Thrive program (PS 17-19), as well as a “Pre-College Workshop” for students in the Recruitment, Retention, and Progression to Graduation Program for Hispanic and Latino Students (PS 20-21).

In my service to the department, I am currently serving as the Conference Coordinator for the First Annual Georgia Conference on First-Year and Transition Studies, and In this position I have developed the conference agenda, scheduled the conference speakers and concurrent session presenters, coordinated conference logistics, and assisted in the development of promotional and conference materials (PS 22). Additionally, I have served on two search committees, one of which I chaired, including the search for the Chair of the Department of First-Year and Transition Studies (PS 23). I have also had the opportunity to serve on several other departmental committees. Another notable area of service to the department was my work as the Curriculum Coordinator for KSU 1111, in which I developed instructional materials (PS 24) coordinate annual events for students in the course, led the preparation and publication (annually) of the course reading packet for students and faculty (PS 25), and provided on-going support for faculty and instructors teaching the course.

An area of considerable service to the department is my role as the Chair of the Graduate Program Development Committee (PS 26). Over the last three years, most of my service in this role has focused on assisting in the development of the of the prospectus and proposal for the Master of Science in First-Year Studies graduate program (the first academic program in this emergent discipline) (PS 27 and 28); preparing “talking points” documents (in Fall 2012 and Spring 2013) (PS 29-30) that were presented to the President and Provost, as well as the Dean’s Council; working with the Associate Vice President for Curriculum to submit the final proposal

to the Board of Regents; and developing the content for the courses in the program, as well as marketing materials (PS 31).

Finally, I have made several presentations to academic advisors (PS 32) and Learning Communities faculty (PS 33-34). Furthermore, I have presented, co-presented, and met with guests from Tri-Country Technical College (PS 35-36), Brigham Young University-Idaho (PS 37-38), Georgia Regents University (PS 39), the University of Minnesota-Duluth (PS 40), the University of North Carolina-Wilmington (PS 41), and Athens Technical College (hosted and planned the group's visit [PS 42-43]). My work with Athens Technical College continued through the development of their Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP), and culminated in the presentation of a 4-hour faculty development workshop (PS 44-45). I have also developed a standing relationship with faculty at Kansai University of International Studies; I hosted and planned the group's first visit, established a "Letter of Intent" to recognize on-going research with the president and faculty, and participated in the group's second KSU visit (PS 46-48).

In the area of service to the profession, the most marked contribution I have made is through my role as Editor of the *Journal of College Orientation and Transition (JCOT)* (PS 49-50). As Editor, I provide leadership and vision to *JCOT*, the peer-reviewed journal published three times a year by NODA. Specifically, I am responsible for the following: coordinating receipt and distribution of manuscripts received for review; communicating with all prospective authors who submit manuscripts; training and overseeing the editorial board members and managing editor; soliciting the submission of new manuscripts; reviewing and editing all manuscripts accepted for publication in the journal; and working with new scholars to develop manuscripts to be considered for publication. Additionally, I currently serve as a member of the NODA Research Committee, and in this role, I have led the group in the identification of areas

for future research, and the development of new grants to catalyze orientation, transition, and retention research (PS 51-54).

Additionally, I have made contributions to the profession through the following: Editorial Board Member for NASPA's peer-reviewed journal, the *Journal of Student Affairs Research and Practice (JSARP)* (PS 55); Faculty Liaison for NASPA's International Education Knowledge Community (PS 56); Wye Faculty Fellow (PS 57); External Reviewer for the Paul P. Fidler Grant (PS 58-60); External Reviewer for the book, *Developing and Sustaining Successful First-Year Programs* (Greenfield, Keup, & Gardner, 2013) (PS 61); Guest Co-Editor for the "Fostering Success for Students in Transition" special issue of *The Journal of College and University Student Housing* (PS 62); Program Reviewer for the Annual Conference on The First-Year Experience and Students in Transition (PS 63) and Students in Transition Conference (PS 64).

Conclusion

This narrative is not an exhaustive compilation of all of my experiences and contributions, but it does document my most significant accomplishments in the areas of teaching, scholarship, and service. My work in these areas, as well contributions made through invited presentations and service activities demonstrate the progression of my disciplinary expertise in local, national, and international arenas. Integral to each of my experiences described in this narrative is my desire to advance the discipline of first-year studies and solidify KSU's reputation in this emergent area. I am tremendously grateful to have had so many opportunities to engage locally, nationally, and internationally with students, faculty, and staff through the areas of teaching, scholarship, and service. Furthermore, I appreciate the generous support of my colleagues in these efforts, and I look forward to continuing this work.