

February 5, 2020

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing in support of Michael Popovic and his application for tenure. While I could speak of his many positive attributes, I focus this letter primarily on his teaching excellence.

I have had many opportunities to assess Michael's teaching method and style. I assisted Michael in teaching of his International Conflict in the Balkans (POLS 395) travel course to Croatia, Montenegro, and Bosnia. Also, as a guest lecturer in my classes, Michael presented on topics of nationalism in my World History course and history of the LGBTQ+ movement in Women's and Gender Studies. Michael has expertise and interest in many subjects, and he is a confident and engaging speaker. Also, as these subject titles above indicate, Michael has experience teaching emotionally fraught topics, including war and genocide, and homophobia and the AIDS epidemic. He does not shy from showing emotion and emphasizing lived history and people's experiences. In the Croatia course, for example, Michael invited a politician who talked about his brush with death, and a citizen who, during the war, was only twelve when her town of Dubrovnik was attacked by the Serbian army. Students were deeply affected by their experience in the class and some of these students commented that the class changed their lives.

Michael's teaching persona is an admirable combination of authority and approachability. Michael's classes are rigorous, and Michael has high standards for students' work and makes those standards clear. He expects students to prepare for class and to ask and answer questions. Michael is a trained expert at facilitating dialogue, and this expertise shows in his classroom discussions. He is also accessible to students in office hours and is an advocate to students on campus. Very importantly, students both like and respect Michael. Although I cannot speak about his course evaluations, I know that students have presented him with the "crown" award many semesters over the years. Students have also expressed, to me, their high regard for Michael.

In addition to working with Michael in the classroom, Michael and I am currently collaborating on a project investigating the social, political, and economic impact of long-standing maritime economies on the status of Croatian women. We have reviewed the secondary literature and constructed the interview questions. We hope that Michael will have the opportunity to travel to Croatia during his sabbatical to complete the interviews and research.

To conclude, Michael Popovic, an excellent teacher and scholar, is extremely deserving of tenure.

Thank you,



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