

December 30, 2008

To Whom it may concern:

I am writing in support of Patrick Lowenthal's application for the position of Assistant Professor, Instructional Technology. Patrick represents the best possible mix of academician, technology specialist, pedagogue, and colleague. Patrick is an exceptional candidate for this position for the reasons I will outline below.

Throughout the three years I have known him, Patrick has demonstrated an intellectual curiosity and work ethic that exceeds those of most of his colleagues. He is an inspiration to me in that he finds the time to complete complex tasks in a quality manner while also remaining open to helping students and fellow faculty with their technological and program needs. He does all of this while also balancing her personal responsibilities and his considerable outside service activities. Because of his experience and knowledge of the program in which he worked at Regis University, Patrick was often called on to take on tasks that were not technically in his job description. Yet without complaint Patrick found a way to get these tasks done quickly and comprehensively. For example, as leader of the Teacher Education Accreditation Team (in addition to his teaching and administrative duties), Patrick brought together a diverse group of faculty and staff—each with varying levels of experience and expertise—to find a way to meet TEAC's myriad requirements. He found a way to navigate the complex process of re-accreditation (which included significant research, a trip to New York to work directly with TEAC administrators, and a complete reworking of Regis' own assessment system), he developed a means for explaining our TEAC procedures to all interested parties, and he streamlined Regis' teacher education reporting system to better meet TEAC's goals. He made the re-accreditation process far less problematic by organizing all relevant materials and putting them online in a user-friendly format. It should be noted that Patrick was the driving force behind the re-accreditation plan, a plan that was necessarily complex due to the University's non-traditional student body, its distance-learning program, and its reliance upon adjunct faculty. Patrick willingly took on a job that, in my opinion, should have been the responsibility of an assessment specialist or a member of the Dean's office. Nonetheless, Patrick excelled in leading Regis through the re-accreditation process.

Patrick also possesses an intellectual curiosity that serves him well as a lifelong learner and an academic. Patrick had to do significant research for the re-accreditation process described above, largely without the assistance of his superiors and colleagues. At the same time, Patrick also did the research necessary to keep Regis' programs up-to-date with changes in technology. This was no easy feat as Regis' budget for instructional technology was extremely limited and thus Regis invested few resources in technology, and there were no other faculty working in the area. Nevertheless, Patrick continued to stay on top of changes in the field and he worked to bring these changes to faculty and to students. Since his move to the University of Colorado system, he has only expanded his knowledge base that much further. Patrick is someone who knows his content area and is passionate about learning more as the field grows and changes.

Similarly, Patrick has the unique ability to dive into research questions and elucidate them more clearly for all parties. I have collaborated with Patrick on a number of articles and presentations. On my own work, Patrick helped me see many areas for improvement. He delved into my areas of research (literacy) and found connections that I had not seen. Conversely, Patrick brought me in on a few pieces on which he was working (he is obviously great at collaborating) and readily integrated my ideas and used my constructive criticism. We presented a paper together at the American Educational Research Association and we submitted our work (two in progress) to high quality national journals. I truly respect Patrick's research and writing ability and enjoy working with him.

Teaching technology is seldom an easy task. This is especially true for non-traditional learners (namely those students who return to school after working in other fields). These are the students Patrick and I taught at Regis. Yet Patrick consistently found a means for explaining ever-changing technology in a way that his students could easily understand. He reinforced the notion that incorporating technology into the classroom (or into the conference room or boardroom as the case may be) is increasingly essential for student understanding. Students picked up on Patrick's passion for the subject. They learned a great deal from him thanks to his ability to incorporate constructivist approaches to learning into his technology courses. In short, Patrick is able to connect theory with practice and to explain this even to the technological novice. I have, over the years, gone to Patrick with any number of my own technical questions because I know that he can explain answers to my problems in a way that I can understand. Patrick is a natural teacher.

Finally, though not of lesser importance, Patrick has a demeanor that makes him a great colleague. He is ready with a smile even during the most stressful of times. He is open to peers, students, administrators regardless of the situation. He is, in short, a warm and affable person who fits in well to any environment. It has been my honor to be associated with Patrick. I fully endorse Patrick's application and welcome any questions you may have.

Genuinely,

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