



THOMAS MORE
UNIVERSITY

Faculty Relations Committee
Chair, Dr. Jodie Mader
Thomas More University
Crestview Hills, KY, 4701

November 11, 2018

To the Faculty Relations Committee,

It is with great pleasure that I give my strongest recommendation of **Dr. Joseph Christensen** for promotion to the rank of Professor at Thomas More University. I have known Dr. Christensen for approximately 8 years. I worked closely with him for five years during his time as director of Thomas More's QEP on critical thinking when I was the assessment coordinator for the QEP. In addition, I have served on many committees and taskforces with him in my role as director of the TMU Success Center. Hence, I know him well.

According to Thomas More's *Promotion and Tenure Handbook*, individuals seeking promotion may be reviewed in five areas. I will focus my letter in the area of *Professional Growth and Development*. Inspection of Dr. Christensen's vita reveals that since coming to Thomas More with the rank of associate professor in 2007 that Dr. Christensen has taken many opportunities for professional growth and development—he has served in new administrative capacities, taken on new leadership roles within the faculty, given talks at national conferences for the first time, and participated in and offered faculty development training.

Leadership development. Professor Christensen was recruited to be the director of Thomas More's Critical Thinking QEP at the same time that I was hired to be the assessment coordinator for the QEP. I had the chance to observe first hand his professional development in the area of leadership. Although he had been a department chair and chair of faculty at his previous institution, this was his first time leading the effort to build a new program from scratch. One impressive thing to me was his desire not only to be effective, but to become even more effective in his leadership. He was always very gracious in seeking my thoughts on how we could improve the QEP and how he could do a better job of leading the effort. To me, Dr. Christensen's attitude toward professional development can be summarized the concepts of integrity and growth. Dr. Christensen grew the QEP and his leadership by consistently reaching out to others so that the QEP grew in new ways. Dr. Christensen forced himself to develop and try new things to recruit faculty, involve faculty in shared governance of the QEP, and manage the growth and administration of the QEP. All this work was with the goal of having a QEP with integrity that helped faculty grow professionally and significantly impacted student development in critical thinking.

Faculty development. As director of the QEP, Dr. Christensen began his first concerted efforts toward becoming a faculty developer. Dr. Christensen developed many new workshops in critical



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thinking. Eventually, he was invited to give a workshop on intellectual virtues at the University of Louisville, a national leader in critical thinking pedagogy and in hosting most of the distinguished lecturers on the topic. After Dr. Christensen's talk, the director of the critical thinking program at U of L, Dr. Patty Payette, told me that Dr. Christensen had given the best presentation on intellectual virtues she had seen. Having seen Dr. Christensen work on this topic over the years I can tell you that workshop was the work of Dr. Christensen toiling to improve himself and his understanding of the topic. In addition to developing as a faculty developer, Dr. Christensen has developed his pedagogy by attending a variety of local, regional, and national conferences including the Annual International Conference on Critical Thinking hosted by the Foundation for Critical Thinking.

Scholarly development. Dr. Christensen has developed as a professional by showing his dedication to learning new ways to reach an audience. During his time at Thomas More Dr. Christensen has presented at national conferences and begun work on a new textbook for physics that utilizes an interactive format. His presentation (which I co-authored) at SACSCOC on QEP reporting was very highly rated by attendees and exhibits his commitment to developing as a presenter. In addition, during his sabbatical last year, Dr. Christensen took on the project of beginning an interactive textbook for physics, one of the first of its kind. To do this Dr. Christensen had to learn how to reach out to publishers, use new on-line publishing tools, and write within the style of a textbook. Taken together, these two examples show Dr. Christensen's commitment to professional development in the area of scholarship and pedagogy.

As demonstrated above, Dr. Christensen has met high standards for professional development and leadership. Indeed, he is recognized as a valued leader on campus, which can be seen by the faculty voting him to be its representative to the board of trustees. In addition, his leadership development paid off for Thomas More as he led us to a successful completion of the critical thinking QEP in which SACSCOC concluded, "No additional report required." This unassuming language is what all QEP directors hope to receive, but all do not—SACSCOC accepts the QEP as successfully impacting student learning, well documented, and needing no further work or justification. In conclusion, it is my professional opinion that Dr. Christensen exceeds expectations in the domain of *Professional Growth and Development* as it pertains to promotion to professor. I strongly and unreservedly recommend **Dr. Joseph Christensen** for promotion.

Sincerely,

John M. Ernst, Ph.D.

Director, Thomas More Success Center and Cleves Scholars Program
Associate Adjunct Professor, Department of Psychology