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To Whom this Concerns:

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I write to recommend Kevin Cassell for any professional position in which strong organizational, leadership, research, writing, and speaking skills are key qualifications. Kevin routinely exhibits all of those qualities in his work, and I have observed him use them all in several contexts over the past four years, even before he became my colleague two years ago when he joined our Department as a Lecturer. He has my most positive recommendation, not only for academic positions, but also for work as a writer/editor/manager in a non-academic program management context. I know that he can enter a new organization and make a strongly positive difference from his first day forward.

I had, in fact, invited (urged, hoped) that Kevin would apply for one of our Lecturer jobs when it came available, that he would consider leaving the position he previously held at the UNM-Taos branch campus in which he led (in effect, Chaired) their English program. At that time I was Chair of the department here, and Kevin took the time to meet with me each semester, traveling the 100 miles to the main campus to keep me current with the curricular and pedagogical changes he was overseeing in his department. When Kevin arrived at Taos he found a program run by a largely oral and anecdotal culture. He assessed what was working and was not, proposed policies and procedures, worked with the faculty to develop them, and then saw that, once they were in place, they were in fact followed. I was impressed, and wanted him to bring that approach with him to our own writing programs.

As a Lecturer at UNM he quickly adapted to a far different situation involving his authority. He proposed new courses (which were enthusiastically accepted, particularly in our American Literature and creative writing programs regarding his "Spoken Word" initiative) and he was a key participant in our continuous-improvement approach to our writing programs: we talk about them constantly and change them almost as constantly. And he did this always for the improvement of what we do. Our programs are stronger for his having his participation. For all of this, Kevin's key contribution as a Lecturer was, as it should be given his 4/3 teaching load, his strong teaching ability.

I personally observed Kevin Cassell teach English 219 Technical Writing in a variety of venues during the fall 2005 semester and the intersession associated with that semester. Initially, Kevin gave me access to his WebCT, fully online section of 219. I logged in to the class, navigated around the assignments, lectures, and so on, and noted that he made several changes to the "template" for WebCT 219s that another Lecturer, Valerie Thomas, had developed and is used in varying degrees (for many it is used in its entirety) by the various 219 instructors.

This first look through Kevin's online 219 was early in the fall term, and it followed up on a conversation we had had in late summer. Before the term began, Kevin and I talked about his plans

to adapt the existing 219 template so that it would better match his approach to teaching technical writing. When I saw the course on the screen, it matched our discussions – basically Kevin uses a slightly different suite of assignments in a very different order, so the alterations weren't, in my judgment, all that major, and the end result was a very usable 219 section. Kevin's online site was orderly, easy to navigate, complete, and it expressed well his personal approach to teaching – interactive, focused, explicit, and reasonable in its expectations for student work.

Later in the term Kevin shared with me a notebook with, among other things, student responses to some of the aspects of the online course. I reviewed some student portfolios of work that included memos, letters, a report, and so on. Again, the materials were clearly within the bounds of a solid section of 219. Teaching an online 219 is like writing a 219 textbook: lectures are all written, comments back and forth to students are all written, and so on. Kevin invests much time in this work, and his students clearly appreciate his commitment to their work.

During the intersession I observed Kevin teaching in the computer classroom next to mine, holding conferences with students one on one during breaks, and, finally, he and I discussed the unique features of the 5-hour, 8 meeting classes we were teaching on several occasions after class. In all of these venues of observation, I was impressed by Kevin's energy and his evident, freely expressed enthusiasm for the material and for his students.

And if that were not enough, consider that Kevin also writes music, produces CDs of his compositions, and he publishes written work as well. He is a complex, talented person with a completely professional approach to his work. He has my strongest recommendation. Please do not hesitate to contact me if I can provide you with any more information about Kevin Cassell; I wish him every success in his future work as he leaves UNM. We miss him.



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Director of Professional Writing and Internships