

Re: Dr. Erin Brooks, application for reappointment
From: Kirk Severtson, chair of Music Theory, History, and Composition
February 21, 2019

Teaching effectiveness

Students find Dr. Brooks' teaching to be actively engaging and classes well-structured to foster their understanding of the material, as evidenced by the consistently strong student evaluations, and which I noted in my own observation of her teaching. She employs creative and varied pedagogical approaches, moving easily among lecture/presentation format, class discussion, and other interactive activities (in the class I observed, she led a participatory activity that helped students gain a basic understanding of how Javanese gamelan music is structured and performed). Her teaching is clearly well-informed by current scholarship and incorporates additional resources outside of the standard textbook that are selected to bring additional perspectives to the subject at hand. She seems especially good at helping students gain contextualized understanding of the repertoire through explicit connections with disciplines outside of music, and incorporation of musical materials and connections from outside the Western canon. It appears that students respond well to this approach, with student evaluations citing positive classroom environment and space for discussion as positives in their courses with her. I appreciated reading her reflections on her own teaching, including feedback from students, in which she looked toward future changes to further improve her courses.

Scholarly activity

Dr. Brooks has established an impressive level of scholarly activity through presentations and publications (both completed and upcoming), including multiple presentations at the national meeting of the American Musicological Society, as well as numerous symposia and conferences around the country and internationally. Of special relevance to the current campus climate is the breadth of perspective she brings to her scholarly pursuits; these often include connections to disciplines outside of music, such as disability studies, gender studies, etc. I also note her numerous contributions to Crane performances in the form of lectures, which are not only informative to the audience, but which also serve as a positive model to students for public presentation of musicological scholarship.

Service

Dr. Brooks is actively engaged in service within Crane as well as the campus-wide community. This includes participation on the Undergraduate Program Committee within Crane as well as two recent search committees. She fosters strong connections across campus with other programs/departments, and through active participation on several campus-wide initiatives, including presentations for the Women, Gender, & Leadership Program and Days of Reflection, as well as numerous committees, such as DIAC, Faculty Senate, and Goals and Planning committee of the Faculty Senate. This level of service represents an impressive level of engagement with the larger campus community.

I strongly support Dr. Brooks' application for reappointment and believe she is on a clear path toward eventual continuing appointment and promotion.