



November 8, 2004

New Faculty Teaching Award Committee
Fort Lewis College
Durango, Co.

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing to give Brian Burke my very highest recommendation for the New Faculty Teaching Award. In addition to his teaching in the Psychology Department, Brian has provided approximately ten hours of counseling in the Counseling Center. In exchange for his providing this service at no charge, our training director, Judith Vanderryn, supervises his counseling. Brian also is an active staff member and comes to our staff meetings. We love and appreciate him very much; he is a real team player.

My first impression of Brian when I interviewed him was that he was a little over-enthusiastic and that he was volunteering to help with more than any first year faculty member could possibly accomplish. I smugly thought "that he would learn" he couldn't do it all. A year and a half later, I am smugly admitting that I was wrong and that he really can "do it all" and that he is pleasant, responsible, and creative in the process. Brian has perhaps the very best time management skills that I have ever encountered.

One of Brian's areas of expertise has to do with motivational interviewing in substance abuse cases. He is very concerned with the substance abuse on our campus and has volunteered to train and work with Marc Goldfarb's peer educators. He encouraged the Psychology Club to co-sponsor with the peer educators last year and this year's alcohol screening. He contacted the media and got publicity for the screening. Both of our alcohol screenings have been very successful—students seem to be thinking about their substance use.

Brian is also an expert in social anxiety. Last spring he led a structured group for eight students. Two of those students also happened to be my clients. They loved the group and frequently discussed new skills they had learned and ways they were applying them. His evaluations on this group were excellent. He is an excellent teacher even when he is a group therapy leader.

Because he is both faculty and staff, Brian is very aware of the Fort Lewis College network of services available to help students. He has done an amazing job of establishing a personal working relationship with many of the support staff on campus;

he uses his good rapport with the various offices to help his advisees, his students, and his clients. He is a real systems person and a team player in that he knows how to utilize resources for the good of others; I think this is part of his secret of good time management. It can also be a wonderful tool for advising.

Last year Brian supervised one of our interns who happened to be our first undergraduate psychology intern. He established an excellent supervisory relationship with this young man. I was able to observe his teaching and supervision style through the growth and progress of this intern. He is very clear, caring, supportive, and focused on the goal. He made himself available whenever the intern had a real need.

Brian presented to our staff the same presentation he designed for the professional counseling meeting he attended. He had devised pictures of cacti to teach the various psychological disorders. The presentation was funny, memorable, and a wonderful teaching aid.

Although I know that his counseling skills assist him with his advising and teaching, Brian is very clear with students about the various roles he has on campus. He does not do counseling with his students or advisees. He excuses himself from staff meetings when we discuss a client he has as a student or advisee. It is helpful to us in staff meetings to have a faculty perspective to remind us how hard the faculty is working to try to reach our clients.

I am very appreciative of the contributions Brian Burke makes with our clients and his students. I think he is a definite Outstanding New Faculty member. He gives and gives and seems to both enjoy it and do a great job in his teaching and advising both in and outside the classroom.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Susan McGinness".

Susan McGinness
Director, Counseling Center.