

# Carleton College

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Dean Michael Stepniak  
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Dean Stepniak:

I write on behalf of Adam Olson, who is seeking promotion from Assistant to Associate professor. Adam is a knowledgeable and conscientious expert in the field of recording technology. He is a fantastic educator, and has an uncommon aptitude for conveying extremely complex ideas to students at varying levels of experience. His combination of skills is rare and extremely desirable, and I strongly urge you to consider his promotion favorably.

As you are aware, Adam and I worked together on the faculty at the Shenandoah Conservatory for four years, from 2007 until 2011. My position as the only full-time musicologist required me to interact with nearly every major and program in the Conservatory. Adam worked mainly with students in the Music Production and Recording Technology program (MPRT). Because these students were required to take my courses in music history, I got to know many of them well. I saw first hand the impact that Adam had on their learning. Adam's interest in and knowledge about a variety of musical styles and epochs was inspiring for many of his students. Although many MPRT students had a professed love of popular forms, and sought specialized training in recording technology to further interests in these styles, Adam's interest in art music helped to validate a wider range of topics for many of his students. In short, his leadership in the MPRT program made my work much easier.

While at Shenandoah, I was approached by Universal Music to co-produce an updated version of the 1972 Marvin Gaye blaxploitation soundtrack *Trouble Man*. Because I was located far from the company's New York headquarters, I did much of the editorial and curatorial work for the project from Winchester. Adam assisted me with the project and

we worked together closely to complete the digital editing and pre-mixing needed to prepare the material for final production. He was masterful in this role. I led the project, but Adam did all of the technological work. He spent countless, unpaid hours working on the project and seemed to enjoy every minute of our time together. His knowledge of various digital audio workstation and editing software, organizational methods, understanding of basic musical processes, and awareness of historical recording processes made him indispensable. In short, without Adam we would have not completed the album.

People that know how to manipulate sound within a computer or at a mixing desk are a dime a dozen. There are a number of reasons why Adam is different. First, he understands the technical aspects of analog and digital audio (and computer operating systems) at the highest level. I've never met anyone with more facility in these areas. Second, he has a varied musical background and understands the context of a wide range of musical performance traditions more than the average recordist. Finally, Adam is a fantastic teacher. He works countless hours to prepare his lectures and teaching materials, meet with students, and review student work. Adam is one of the gems in our field, and I cannot recommend him more highly for promotion.

Sincerely,

Dr. Andrew Flory