



SHENANDOAH™

U N I V E R S I T Y

Dr. Michael Stepniak , Dean and Professor of Music
Shenandoah University
1460 University Drive
Winchester, VA 22601

September 17, 2014

Dear Dr. Stepniak,

Adam Olson has asked me to write a letter of recommendation on behalf of his seeking promotion to Associate Professor. It is an honor and I do so with great enthusiasm.

I first had the pleasure of meeting Mr. Olson as he voluntarily participated in a three day Service-Learning conference during the Summer of 2011. His thoughtful engagement with all faculty, his enthusiasm, questions, and active participation in all aspects were a clear indication to me of his commitment to service to community and service in his chosen profession. Since that initial meeting with Mr. Olson, I have been inspired by his talents and teaching which he employs to create and sustain opportunities for our students, fellow faculty, and staff to learn and become aware of applying classroom instruction to life experiences. Mr. Olson has set the bar high for all of us.

In the Fall of 2011, I made a purposely unannounced visit to one of the community service sites that Mr. Olson created along with his fellow faculty member, Golder O'Neill. Fellowship Bible Church in Winchester had purchased a very complicated and state-of-the-art sound system which was to be operated by lay church members. Some of these members had no technical training. Mr. Olson, along with his colleague Mr. O'Neill O'Neill, had spent numerous meeting hours with the church and created a partnership in which their students could work with the church members to teach and support the correct use of the sound system. At 7:30 a.m. on a Sunday morning, I observed for three hours his students interacting with the church members, supporting and assisting the use of the very expensive state-of-the-art equipment. I spoke with five church members and the pastor about this collaboration. All were extremely complimentary not only of our students but of Mr. Olson. In speaking with the four students, they were very excited about the opportunity to teach and interact with community members. This is a perfect and robust example of Service-Learning which Mr. Olson initiated, nurtured, and made sustainable.


Mr. Olson's commitment to Partnership with Community Day is enduring throughout his tenure at Shenandoah University. His generous gift of time to serve on a panel for planning and organizing faculty and students resulted in leading students to meet and work with the Luminus Studio Manager and Remote Recording Practicum Instructor. Through that connection, students helped clean the historically significant church in Boyce, Virginia where the recording studio was purchased.

One of the key components of Service-Learning in our university is that of student reflection, sustainability, and documentation of learned experiences. Mr. Olson continues to be generous with this time in meeting with fellow faculty and students to evaluate, reassess outcomes, and plan for accessibility for meaningful service projects. His suggestions and insights lead to deeper and more meaningful experiences for our faculty and students as documented through on-line surveys and personal interviews by my office. His participation as a judge for presentation of persuasive speeches for our 2014 Summer High School Leadership by Design final program is yet another example of Mr. Olson's willingness to give of his talent and the most precious gift of all, his time. He does all this with good cheer and encouragement to his colleagues and students.

Frankly, I can think of no other individual who more deserves to be a part of our university as Assistant Professor than Adam Olson.

If I can be of further assistance on behalf of Mr. Olson in his pursuit of this promotion, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Most sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Karen Kennedy Schultz". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Karen" being the most prominent.

Karen Kennedy Schultz, Ph.D., MBA
Director & Professor, Center for Public Service and Scholarship