



October 19, 2014

From: Ginger L. Zierdt, Ph.D., Interim Assistant Vice President for Undergraduate Education 

Re: Elizabeth J. Sandell, Ph.D.
Dept. Educational Studies: Elementary & Early Childhood
Promotion – Letter of Support

It is with great pleasure to contribute a letter of support on behalf of Dr. Elizabeth (Beth) Sandell for Promotion consideration. I have had the distinct pleasure of working with Beth for more than ten years within a variety of contexts. As colleagues, along with Beth's promotion documentation, will address her scholarly production excellence, innovative teaching skills, continuous honing of her professional craft, and remarkable advising and service to students, I would like to highlight a body of work that has served not only her department and college very well, but the University and wider community. Beth's leadership in forging global partnerships, to inform and guide students' cultural competency as well as pedagogical practices in teacher education, have been most remarkable.

Dr. Sandell has established a successful partnership with Northeastern State University in Magadan, Russia; whereby, she has single-handedly promoted, advocated, and built the foundation upon which our two universities have been able to come together in global partnership through education. I was most fortunate to travel, under the astute travel coordination and leadership of Beth, to the cities of St. Petersburg, Moscow, and Magadan, Russia in 2007 as part of a small visiting faculty delegation. The itinerary included meeting University pedagogical faculty in each city to explore partnership development, and culminated with the formal signing of the institutional partnership agreement with Northeastern State, one that Dr. Sandell had spent a handful of years cultivating, nurturing, and garnering deep respect and trust among the teaching faculty as well as administration at both institutions. The signing ceremony, symbolic and rich in tradition, was one of the most regal and auspicious events I professionally had occasion to be part of, and was particularly meaningful in the role that my colleague, Beth, played as one who not only was representing Minnesota State Mankato, but the state of Minnesota and the United States of America.

The partnership that Dr. Sandell leads has resulted in Northeastern State faculty, administrators, undergraduate, and graduate students visiting Minnesota State Mankato across multiple semesters, while a handful of Northeastern State graduates have become students at Minnesota State Mankato in our graduate programs. For extended stays, Dr. Sandell has assisted students with arranging for residential housing, graduate assistantships, and has served as an envoy between the Russian students, their families, and the University. Dr. Sandell, who has traveled to Russia over ten times, has historically been accompanied by fellow University faculty, students, and community members for it is her desire to relentlessly build bridges for cultural understanding.

Related to Beth's global partnership leadership, she has also been a department, college, and University leader among the use of the Intercultural Competency Inventory (IDI). The IDI is a premier, cross-cultural assessment of intercultural competence that is used by individuals and organizations to build intercultural competence to achieve international and domestic diversity and inclusion goals and outcomes. Dr. Sandell has earned the distinction of IDI Administrator, whereby she possesses a unique and highly valuable set of skills and competencies that she shares widely with the University community

- Trained to use the Intercultural Conflict Style Inventory
- Proficient in using the IDI for increasing intercultural competence for individuals, teams, and organizations
- Knowledgeable researching support expert for the campus - how IDI differs from traditional measures of intercultural competence, and cross-cultural validity and reliability research protocols used in developing the IDI
- Interprets individual and group IDI profiles of intercultural competence
- Facilitates IDI feedback to individuals and groups

In summary, my perspective of Dr. Sandell's cumulative record of professional performance and high achievement is commensurate with the aspirations our University holds for Professor-rank faculty. Beth has most admirably dedicated her professional career as teacher-leaders at Minnesota State Mankato to upholding and promoting our core values – integrity, diversity, access, responsibility, and excellence.