

November 12, 2008

Sheldon Kamieniecki
Dean, Division of Social Sciences

RE: Professor Kysa Nygreen, Merit Advancement to Assistant Professor, Step 4 (from Step 3)

Dear Dean Kamieniecki:

The Education Department has completed its appraisal of Professor Kysa Nygreen for reappointment and merit advancement. Professor Nygreen was appointed to Assistant Professor, Step 3 off-scale effective July 1, 2007. Because Professor Nygreen has made outstanding contributions through scholarship, teaching and university service, the department recommends that she receive a greater than normal merit increase equivalent to 1-1/2 steps and advance to Assistant Professor, Step 4 off-scale, effective July 1, 2009, at an annual salary of \$64,450. The faculty took three votes on this case with the majority voting in favor of reappointment and a greater than normal merit increase. The vote of the seventeen eligible voting faculty members was the following:

	In favor	Opposed	Abstain	Waive	Recuse	Absent not Voting
Reappointment	13	0	0	0	0	4
1-step Merit	13	0	0	0	0	4
Off scale (1/2 step) increase	12	1	1	0	0	4

Research and Scholarship

Professor Nygreen’s research program has quickly become well established, and it reflects a clear and deepening trajectory. During her first year as an Assistant Professor, she has two publications in press: a refereed journal article (co-authored with undergraduate students) and a chapter in a State University of New York press book. She also developed and submitted a proposal for a book that extends her dissertation research, and this received interested responses from two major university presses (Stanford and Chicago). Further, Professor Nygreen secured three internal UCSC grants to support her emergent participatory research program focused on undocumented students, and she has created a foundation for collaboration on this investigation with other scholars both within the U.C. and at other research universities. In addition to these quite substantial achievements, she has been actively presenting the results of her research at inter/national professional meetings (two refereed paper presentations) and other universities.

Professor Nygreen’s in press co-authored article, “Students Informing Now (S.I.N.) Challenge the Racial State in California Without Shame ... *SIN Vergüenza!*,” is appearing in a well-respected refereed journal, *Educational Foundations*. Written collaboratively with thirteen undergraduates at UCSC and a doctoral student at UCLA, this article became the basis for a major inter/national conference presentation (refereed) as well as presentations at three New York universities and several UCSC venues. Professor Nygreen facilitated the data collection and analysis, developed the analytic framework and first working outline, wrote the majority of the first

draft, and also did the final editing and revisions. The essay situates the dilemmas facing these undocumented university students in a historical context of struggles for immigrant rights, and positions their organization and political project in relation to other formations of youth activism. The insights generated through this article and the ongoing research on which it is based has already made a documented impact on the thinking and policy-making of UCSC administrators (see Vice Chancellor McGinty's comments in the Student Affairs Newsletter, quoted below under "Service"). Because of the participatory research approach being utilized by Professor Nygreen, her work with this vulnerable student population will continue to enable the students themselves to speak to/with the research community at the same time as Professor Nygreen can draw deeply from their experience in contributing to theory about immigration and schooling. This line of research promises to also contribute substantively to local, state, and national policy makers as well as practitioners who serve this student population.

The refereed article written with the SIN Collective represents an early scholarly culmination emerging from Professor Nygreen's new program of research regarding the experiences of undocumented students. Her methodology of in-depth ethnographic study linked with participatory action research requires a substantial commitment of time and energy to develop the contacts, trust, and collaborative agreements needed for long-term work. She has moved assertively to establish this foundation, building both a national network of 'informants' and collaborators among the undocumented student population and also building a national network of scholars who are pursuing related investigations with whom to team up in the development and analysis of data and in the construction of theory. Professor Nygreen has successfully sought seed grant funds to support this stage of her work, and she also has demonstrated a mature capacity to translate early findings into refereed publications and presentations. These achievements in the initial period of her appointment to UCSC augur well for her ongoing productivity.

Professor Nygreen's SUNY book chapter, "Urban Youth and the Construction of Racialized and Classed Political Identities," uses socio-cultural theoretical frameworks and ethnographic research methodologies to investigate the political identities articulated and enacted by urban youth engaged in an educational project directed at their peers. She situates the identity-forming practices of the youth within broader ideological discourses, and uncovers the ways in which contradictory identifications with agency and victimization emerged. In fact, Professor Nygreen discovered that the same counter-narratives constructed by the youth could in one moment reproduce their position as raced and classed persons without power or political agency, and in another moment they could form the basis of their challenge to the status quo and position themselves as social change agents. Professor Nygreen's complicating of the race, class, and political identity formation of marginalized youth contributes a more nuanced view of the educational and political challenges facing these youth and their allies, thus contributing to theory development, and it also suggests lines of development for the design of learning environments that can support youth empowerment and engaged citizenship.

The research reported on in the SUNY book chapter comprises an element of the book that Professor Nygreen is writing and that is described in her prospectus, *"These Kids": The Social Construction of Failure at a Last Chance School*. This book extends the analysis she developed in her dissertation, and provides both an intimate portrait of how school failure is constructed in the lives of low-income and racialized youth, and a provocative and critical analysis of the discursive practices through which the youth embody and contest this construction. Professor Nygreen

innovatively repositions the scholarly and policy framing of school failure, and she demonstrates that the very categories of success and failure present barriers to educational change that could lead to more meaningful learning for “these kids” and to their more substantive engagement in both schools and society. As noted by the Stanford Acquisitions Editor, Professor Nygreen’s book “stands out” and can “provide a unique and timely perspective” on these issues. Indeed, Professor Nygreen’s book situates her evocative ethnographic study of a generally neglected domain (continuation high schools) and of a marginalized and demeaned population (low income, raced youth) utilizes discourse analysis to set her findings in a broader theoretical context that problematizes the meritocratic ideology of schooling. Her investigation of these discursive dynamics illuminates the paradox of schooling’s promise to enable “these kids” to “get ahead” and reveals the ways in which this paradox shapes their identities and acts to reproduce the class and race status quo. This book should make a very substantial impact when it gets published.

In sum, Professor Nygreen has far exceeded expectations for the initial year of her appointment as an Assistant Professor. She has a steady stream of publications emerging and in process that position her at the leading edge of theoretical developments in ethnographic work in education and that also contribute to contested and significant policy domains. Professor Nygreen demonstrates a knack for securing support for the early stages of her research program and for capturing her initial findings for publications and conference presentations. Her achievements in research and scholarship have been quite substantial.

Teaching

Course	Quarter	Number Enrolled	Evaluations Returned
Education 294	Fall 2007	1	na
Education 181	Winter 2008	45	41
Education 293B	Winter 2008	1	na
Education 297	Winter 2008	1	na
Education 92C	Spring 2009	234	155
Two Course Releases			

In the first year of her UCSC Assistant Professor appointment, Professor Nygreen taught two undergraduate courses and three independent studies for graduate students. She received two course releases, one that is standard for new hires and one to support her preparation for taking over one of the department’s largest and most demanding lecture courses. She is committed to integrating opportunities for student voice in her large undergraduate courses, and she actively seeks out and responds to student feedback through mid-quarter evaluations.

Her first course, Education 181 (Race, Class and Culture) is a relatively large upper division course that has been taught by a variety of previous instructors. Professor Nygreen expanded on and integrated various parts of previous versions of the course, and she made the requirements and expectations very explicit and thorough. Her 17-page syllabus plus the assessment rubrics indicate her diligence in scaffolding undergraduate students' educational experience. This diligence was rewarded when 93% of her students indicated that the course preparation and organization was very good to excellent. Sixty-five percent of the students rated the syllabus and handouts as excellent. The evaluation categories rating the instructor were overall strongly positive, with less than 5% responding with poor or fair ratings on any of the nine statements. Six statements regarding

instructor appraisal received over 85% very good to excellent ratings. Comments such as, "The professor was very insightful," "[She] clarified difficult concepts and showed great sensitivity for delicate issues," "[She] was very organized and very knowledgeable," and "effective and inspirational," can be found throughout her evaluations. The course was highly rated as well, with 88% rating the course overall as a very good to excellent learning experience. Although there were fewer ratings of "excellent" regarding exams, assignments and required reading, with most students rating these features of the course as satisfactory or very good, the students' comments indicate that slight adjustments could be made to improve these areas.

For her other course (EDUC 92C, Diversity and Education), Professor Nygreen provided very significant teaching support to the department by taking responsibility for one of our three large introductory lecture courses for the education minor that had been taught for a number of years by temporary instructors. Professor Nygreen went far beyond the expectation for beginning faculty members in her redesign and creative implementation of this course, which deals with often-controversial issues. Instruction in these introductory lecture courses in education is made more difficult because they attract a wide range of students, from first to fourth year, from those personally interested in education careers to those simply taking the courses because of schedule convenience and to fulfill a GE requirement. In addition, the course has five teaching assistants assigned to it, and so Professor Nygreen had to interview, hire, and manage this teaching team along with preparing and delivering the course itself. Her performance in this challenging assignment was impressive.

With characteristic conscientiousness, she attended 92-series lectures by other faculty members, interviewed former 92C TAs and instructors, and developed a comprehensive syllabus, with additional rubrics and guidelines for assignments. Professor Nygreen did an admirable job of teaching it. More than 90% of the students rated 15/16 features of course as satisfactory or above. The course overall, and the instructor's overall effectiveness, were both rated as either very good or excellent by 77% of the students. She was found to be, "extremely organized," "very responsive to students' needs and concerns," and "enthusiastic." She responded well to the mid-quarter evaluation, as indicated by both comments and the letter from her TA, changing her lectures to incorporate student feedback. Her goal of using student-centered pedagogy in lecture is theoretically sound and carefully thought out. While students were mixed in their reaction to this type of teaching, we applaud Professor Nygreen for incorporating it into the class format, and for her transparency with students in discussing with them her rationale for using this approach.

Other teaching activities include the design and development of a new doctoral level course, which Professor Nygreen will teach in Winter 2009, as well as mentoring for doctoral students. She is the primary advisor for one doctoral student and the second reader for another.

In sum, Professor Nygreen performed strongly in challenging teaching assignments that included a large lecture course not generally taught by junior faculty members. She was well respected as a teacher and mentor during her first year as an Assistant Professor. She is clearly knowledgeable, organized, and effective in creating an academic environment that is open and encouraging to all students, and she explicitly includes effective strategies for the educational advancement of students in various underrepresented groups. She deals with issues of race and culture with sensitivity and skill and is receptive to student feedback. She is a hard-working teacher

with a gift for reaching her students. Professor Nygreen's overall teaching performance was clearly outstanding.

Professor Nygreen has no outstanding narrative evaluations.

Service

During the 2006-2007 academic year, Professor Nygreen performed outstanding service to the Education Department, the UCSC campus and its students, and her professional field, going well beyond the normal expectations for a first-year Assistant Professor. Here, we present some highlights of that service.

Professor Nygreen served as a member of the Education Department's Undergraduate Program Committee, working with the committee to develop programmatic revisions for the education minor, conduct baseline research of student course-taking patterns, establish counterparts at Cabrillo College to the entry-level requirements for the minor, and foster the Department's relationship with the Cal-Teach program. In addition, she served on the Department's search committee for a scholar studying the nexus between communities and schooling. The successful search, which involved reviewing over 100 applications, participating in multiple committee and faculty-wide discussions, and interviewing 4 candidates, was one of the most demanding and time-consuming in our department's recent history.

Professor Nygreen has actively contributed to her professional field, organizing and presenting at key meetings throughout her first year at UCSC. In addition, she reviewed a book proposal for the State University of New York Press, reviewed articles for submission to *Educational Foundations* and the *American Journal of Community Psychology*, and reviewed proposals for the American Anthropological Association and the American Educational Research Association.

Finally, and perhaps most impressively, Professor Nygreen provided broad and deep leadership for student-initiated activities designed to support UCSC's undocumented students, sometimes referred to as "AB540 students" (invoking the state law that allows such students to pay in-state tuition if they have attended California high schools for three years, a major help since they are not eligible for financial aid and would otherwise have to pay out-of-state tuition). Professor Nygreen served as unofficial mentor and ally for the student group, Students Informing Now (S.I.N.), supporting its efforts to do outreach in high schools locally and throughout northern California. She also co-authored a research paper with the students in this organization, and she played a central role in facilitating 7 undergraduates, all first-generation working-class students of color, to travel to New York to present the paper (after its refereed acceptance) at the prestigious American Educational Research Association conference and at several other New York university venues. To make the trip possible, Professor Nygreen led efforts that enabled the students to raise over \$8,000 in one quarter.

Professor Nygreen's efforts with S.I.N. clearly exemplify the University's mission to promote excellence and equity, and they have been documented in campus publications and recognized by University leaders. Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs McGinty wrote that "the dedication to scholarship, pursuit of excellence and commitment to making the campus and the

world a better place” that the students had demonstrated in their work with Professor Nygreen in New York “inspired much of my thinking as we worked to craft a vision statement for the division” (Student Affairs’ Focus Newsletter, Spring, 2008). Professor Nygreen’s work was also recognized by Chancellor Blumenthal, who included her in an invitation-only dinner and dialogue at University House to discuss ways to support AB 540 students at UCSC.

Overall, Professor Nygreen has demonstrated exemplary and highly meritorious service at the departmental and campus levels, and her national-level professional service is noteworthy at this early stage of her career.

Summary

The Education Department’s assessment of Professor Nygreen’s scholarship, teaching, and service finds the record more than worthy of reappointment and greater than normal merit advancement from Assistant Professor Step 3 to Step 4 off-scale.

Sincerely,

Kip Téllez
Associate Professor and Department Chair