

TO: School of Education Personnel Committee
FROM: Andrea Lachance, Associate Professor and Chair *A. Lachance*
Childhood/Early Childhood Education Department
DATE: March 19, 2010
RE: Continuing Appointment of Dr. Kimberly Rombach

After carefully reviewing Dr. Kimberly Rombach's on-line professional portfolio, I am strongly recommending Dr. Rombach for continuing appointment as an Assistant Professor in the Childhood/Early Childhood Education Department. The rationale for this recommendation is explained in the sections below.

Teaching

The evidence in Dr. Rombach's portfolio demonstrates that she is an exceptional teacher. Dr. Rombach has taught eight different courses across three different programs since joining the Childhood/Early Childhood Education Department in the fall of 2004, and student feedback across all those courses has been extremely positive. Her Classroom Teaching Evaluation (CTE) scores are consistently in the high 4's on a five point scale and student comments are equally glowing. Comments include: "Wonderful professor! She truly cares about her students. This was a difficult class with a lot of work, but Kim helped us through it," and, "I can't say enough good things about this instructor! This class has been such a joy to be part of. The workload was intense at times but worthwhile. Instructor was abundantly kind and thoughtful. She patiently accommodated all our various needs and allowed us some flexibility."

Dr. Rombach has also provided evidence that she is a reflective teacher who is always striving to improve and adapt her teaching to better meet students' needs. She has adopted new texts, utilized various forms of technology, implemented different types of assessment (including exams which are typically not used in education courses), and modeled many cooperative learning strategies for her students.

I was fortunate to observe Dr. Rombach's teaching this semester. As students report in their comments, the content is clear and organized. She varies her strategies so that students are always engaged. Dr. Rombach also insures that each student participates in discussions, and most seem comfortable doing so. Most importantly, Dr. Rombach brings a passion to her teaching that certainly appears to inspire and engage her students. Dr. Rombach is clearly a talented, effective teacher whose teaching is held in high regard by her students and her colleagues.

Scholarship

Dr. Rombach has made strong progress on her scholarly agenda in her years leading up to continuing appointment. Since the fall of 2004, she has had a paper published in the *Electronic Journal for Inclusive Education*, two papers published in conference proceedings related to technology, an additional paper under review, and a book proposal in preparation.

In addition, Dr. Rombach has had both internal and external grants funded, most of them focused on the area of inclusive and special education. For the third year in a row, Dr. Rombach and her Co-PI, Dr. Susan Stratton, have been awarded an external \$24,000 grant funded through the New York State Higher Education Support Center for Systems Change Proposal which supports the work of the Mid-state Regional Taskforce on Quality Inclusive Schooling. Dr. Rombach also received a 2009 Nuala McGann Drescher Award Grant to work on technology initiatives related to inclusive education.

For the past two years, Dr. Rombach has worked with Dr. David Smukler from the Foundations and Social Advocacy Department on a PDS award entitled, the "Unified Teaching and Learning Initiative (UTLI)." This project, which is funded at \$30,000 for five years, focuses on helping teams of special educators and general educators work collaboratively to foster more inclusive practices in their own classrooms and throughout their schools. The project involves both preservice and inservice teachers and seeks to support and improve the education of students with special needs that occurs within a general education environment. This initiative is only one of four active PDS projects at the college and has done much to encourage collaboration among departments within the School of Education and between the college and the Cortland City School District.

In addition to her publications and grants, Dr. Rombach has been an active participant and presenter at conferences. Since starting at SUNY Cortland, she has made fifteen presentations at international, national and regional conferences in her field. Major themes of her presentations focus on using technology in teacher preparation and issues related to diversity in education and inclusive teaching practices.

The work that Dr. Rombach has accomplished in the area of scholarship is evidence that she has a strong and clear line of intellectual inquiry. She has worked systematically and diligently to connect her scholarship to her interest and passions and makes clear connections between her scholarly pursuits and her teaching. Given her deep commitment to high quality pre-service teacher education and inclusive teaching practices, I have no doubt that Dr. Rombach will continue to make substantive scholarly contributions in these areas.

Service

Dr. Rombach has a strong record in service and has contributed to the department, the college, and the community in a variety of ways. Dr. Rombach has taken on several leadership roles in her service commitments including acting as coordinator of the M.S.T.

program in Childhood Education, acting as chair of two departmental committees, and recently leading professional development workshops at the Cortland County Teacher Center. She has participated in more than a dozen different committees on campus at the department, school, and college level including the Long Range Planning Committee, the Faculty Development Committee, the Childhood/Early Childhood Education Department Personnel Committee, and the Field Experiences Advisory Committee. Dr. Rombach has also done professional service in reviewing papers for national professional organizations, such as the American Educational Research Association (AERA), and reviewing book proposals for Allyn & Bacon Publishers.

In the area of service, Dr. Rombach has earned the reputation of being a dedicated participant and leader in any endeavor of which she is a part. Her work ethic and contributions in her service activities are deeply appreciated and widely admired.

Summary

The evidence in Dr. Rombach's well-organized on-line professional portfolio demonstrates she has clearly met, and in most areas exceeded, the high expectations for continuing appointment in the Childhood/Early Childhood Education Department. Her teaching is outstanding, her scholarship focused and productive, and her service strong. She is a highly valued member of the Childhood/Early Childhood Education Department and has a strong reputation across the campus as an excellent teacher and colleague. I look forward to her future outstanding contributions to our academic community.