



MEMORANDUM

To: Ruth Watkins, Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs
From: Ann Darling, Assistant Vice President, Undergraduate Studies
Date: February 20, 2018
Re: University Professor for 2018-2020

Approved
R. Watkins
2-21-18

I am pleased to forward to you the Undergraduate Council's recommendation for appointment to the special rank of University Professor for the 2018-2020 academic years. From a field of outstanding applicants, the Council has selected Professor Sarah Projansky who is jointly appointed in the Departments of Film Studies and Gender Studies and who serves as Associate Dean of the College of Fine Arts. In the judgment of the Undergraduate Council, Professor Projansky is eminently qualified for the rank of University Professor.

The rank of University Professor offers faculty who have attained unusual distinction in undergraduate teaching the opportunity to launch a new project that will make significant differences in our students' educational experiences. This project should reflect the rich traditions of inquiry or creative activity found in one or more of the four areas that constitute the Intellectual Explorations component of our students' General Education studies, as well as courses that satisfy the University's graduation requirements.

Professor Projansky proposes to develop a unique course on the critical examination of celebrity that can ultimately serve a large number of undergraduate students. The course will explore celebrity culture through the lenses of media, politics, economics and psychology. Students will investigate how celebrity constructs and is constructed by the mediated environments we all inhabit. They will also be invited to reflect on how their own identities are influenced by celebrity culture. Both mainstream and social media channels will be examined in the course.

In her proposal Projansky also describes using the University Professorship to invite speakers to campus, to create a one-day Celebrity Symposium, and to create a directed study group for scholars (students and faculty) on campus who are doing work related to celebrity studies. For example, Professor Projansky is partnering with UtahPresents to bring a celebrity to campus who will speak analytically to our campus community about how celebrity functions on YouTube. These events are designed to bring students, faculty and community together in the critical analysis of celebrity culture.

Professor Projansky's background, teaching and research makes her well-suited to design and teach the proposed course. Her research on celebrity culture has received recognition from the National Communication Association and the Organization for the Study of Communication, Language and Gender. As her application states, she has been designing and teaching general education courses since the beginning of her career as a graduate

Office of Undergraduate Studies
195 South Central Campus Drive
Salt Lake City, UT 84112-0511
(801) 581-3811

teaching assistant at the University of Iowa. She currently sits on the General Education Curriculum Committee which demonstrates her understanding of and commitment to the success of our students.

We request your assistance in forwarding the nomination of Professor Projansky to the Board of Trustees for their consideration and approval.

Thank you for your assistance and for your support of the University Professorship.

Enclosures

cc: President David Pershing
Martha Bradley, Senior Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs
John W. Scheib, Dean, College of Fine Arts
Kathryn Stockton, Dean, School of Cultural and Social Transformation
Kevin Hanson, Chair, Department of Film Studies
Susie Porter, Chair, Gender Studies Division
Maddy Orritt, Secretary of the Faculty
Bonnie Wiese, Executive Assistant, Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs