

Candidate Statements

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Candidate Statement

Robin Allnutt

English

promotion to the rank of advanced instructor

I. Candidate's Statement - Robin Mallory Allnutt

"Make new mistakes," I tell all of my classes at Virginia Tech. I believe the classroom should be a safe environment to experiment with unfamiliar ideas, new ways for students to think and write. I do all I can to foster and reward their creativity. I have learned more from trying and "failing" than I ever have from succeeding.

When I recognize a mistake I've made in the classroom, I talk about it with my students. I even give them an anonymous forum on Blackboard where they can point out things they would like me to do differently in class. I then discuss their feedback in class. The students are candid, but remarkably respectful even when they choose to comment anonymously. Students listen and respond to me because I listen and respond to them. Listening to students is still the best advice I have ever given another teacher. My students always know before me whether a lesson or discussion is working or not. If I fail to pay attention, it's at my own peril.

I got my first teaching job at the Northern Virginia Community College in January of 2001. From the first moment in my first class, I was hooked. Someone was actually paying me to talk about literature and films and writing—my favorite things. The fact that my first class was dropped in my lap with less than two hours notice did not dampen my spirits. It merely spurred me on. I had three hours to fill with something useful about early American literature.

I quickly learned to be comfortable with improvisation. I had no idea that my time as the worst actor (my assessment) in an improvisational acting troupe over ten years before would actually pay off beyond being a wildly entertaining extracurricular activity in my undergraduate years at Virginia Tech (1987-1991). That first American literature class was a great success. Soon, I began to cultivate those moments of improvisation in my classroom.

Five semesters later, I moved on from the community college and back to Virginia Tech, my alma mater and, for two years, my employer. My first stint on the Virginia Tech faculty came before the community college. I was hired in March of 1997 two months before I officially graduated with my MFA (Creative Writing Fiction) from George Mason University. I worked as a faculty research associate for the principal investigators of two research grants (based at the Northern Virginia Center): one for the NIMH regarding domestic violence, and the other with the USDA developing after school programs for teenagers on US Army bases around the world. My duties on each of the grants varied. They included interviewing research subjects (abusers and victims of domestic abuse), coordinating and tracking data collection by the graduate research assistants, as well as creating and maintaining all of the relevant databases. I also wrote and/or edited many of the documents and curricula associated with each of the grants. For my first eight months, I also managed all of the fiscal matters related to these two grants, and one other USDA grant (nearly \$3 million in toto) until a full time accountant was hired.

In the spring of 1999, the novelist Richard Bausch, one of my mentors from graduate school, asked me to join the first Heritage Writer's Workshop at George Mason University. After the first week of the workshop, I realized that I had all but set aside my fiction writing since going to work for Virginia Tech at the Northern Virginia Center. While my professional work was important, it was creatively stifling and sometimes deeply disturbing (Re: domestic violence). Returning to the world of creative writing was like breathing fresh air for the first time in two years. I knew that I had to make a change. I decided to take a year off to write and make something happen.

Something happened.

In my fifteen month “sabbatical”, I completed a draft of one novel, planned the outline and research for another. I wrote a sitcom teleplay and the first drafts of a feature length screenplay. The work that I produced in that year led to my being short listed for two prestigious year-long residential fellowships: one for screenwriting in Hollywood, the other for fiction writing at the University of East Anglia in the United Kingdom. I also won a highly competitive “Waiter” scholarship at the 2000 Bread Loaf Writers’ Conference where I secured a literary agent. The following year, I was asked to return to Bread Loaf as editor of *The Crumb*, a daily newsletter as old as the now 82 year old conference.

I returned from Bread Loaf in August of 2000 more determined than ever to pursue a literary career. I was immediately rehired by the Association of Writers and Writing Programs (AWP) a well regarded literary nonprofit organization where I had worked as a staffer throughout much of graduate school. A few months later, largely because of my Bread Loaf scholarship, I got my first teaching job at the Northern Virginia Community College.

I returned to Virginia Tech for a third time in the fall of 2002, this time as a teacher at the main campus. I had left Blacksburg eleven years earlier with a BA in English. Ed Falco, my undergraduate mentor, introduced me around to the other creative writers (He had earlier introduced me to Lucinda Roy at a 2001 alumni event which led to my return to Blacksburg). Other faculty, in particular Nancy Metz, Cheryl Ruggiero, Aileen Murphy, Paul Heilker, and lately Ed Weathers, were especially generous with time and friendship as they mentored me in both teaching and writing. Every semester, I still pick up new ideas, new techniques, from watching and talking to my colleagues.

Each week, I find myself talking to one colleague or another about the particular challenges of that week. I learn from each of these discussions. The new London study abroad program arose directly from such a discussion at a faculty reception in the fall of 2004. I simply asked Jane Wemhoener, the new study abroad coordinator, what had happened to our department’s study abroad program. The program that I joined through the English Department in the Summer of 1990 was an invaluable and deeply memorable part of my undergraduate education. I wanted to create a similar experience for our current undergraduates. After a few follow up discussions with Jane, she asked Fred D’Aguiar to join us (architecture professor, Susan Piedmont-Palladino, joined the program more recently). Jane, Fred, and I have worked together since then through countless obstacles to get the program up and running. We will be spending a month in London in the summer of 2008. We already have 16 official participants signed up over a month before the application deadline (along with several other students still in the pipeline).

Outside of the new month-long study abroad program in the UK, the two other experiences that I have found most professionally rewarding as a teacher were my three years as a GTA Advisor (2003 – 2006) and my contributions to the last four revisions of the English Department’s composition textbook. I revise all of my courses each semester. I go to work, sometimes tweaking and trimming, more often performing major surgery on my class plans. With each revision of the department’s composition text, I learn more about the varied and effective ways of teaching writing. I loved mentoring the GTAs, and, in turn, learning from them. They gave me fresh confidence in my own continuously evolving methods as a teacher.

Make new mistakes. It is what I always try to do.

Candidate Statement

Terri Bourdon

Mathematics

promotion to the rank of senior instructor

I. Candidate's Statement:

My name is Terri Bourdon and I have been an instructor in the Mathematics Department since 1977. I have taught a wide variety of math classes in several different formats. I have also been actively involved in course development, specifically the introduction of technology into calculus classes and the online courses offered through the Math Emporium. While most of my work has been with the freshman-level courses, I have also taught classes primarily offered to sophomore students and higher.

During the mid-1990's, there was a significant national trend toward more active learning in higher education in general, and in calculus instruction specifically. I consider myself lucky to have been at Virginia Tech during that time. I was asked to participate in the first Faculty Development Institute, where I was introduced to the use of Mathematica software in mathematics. From that point on, I began to incorporate new technology into all of my classes, using Mathematica for both in-class illustrations and to help my students solve practical applications of calculus. Over the next several years, I worked with other math faculty to develop computer lab assignments to be used in all of the freshman-level calculus courses taken by students in Mathematics, Engineering, and the Physical Sciences.

I became even more involved with technology and course development when the Math Emporium opened in 1997. For the first few years, I was responsible for introducing this new lab environment into our calculus courses. Then in 2001, I began to develop, and later teach, several new courses to be delivered online through the Emporium. Even though I was eager to be involved in this new method of instruction, I was concerned about the reduced amount of personal contact. However, I discovered that I had more interaction with students than in the past, as freshmen seem to be more comfortable seeking help in the Math Emporium than visiting a professor's office. I have also found the challenge of answering student questions for courses that I am not currently teaching to be an additional benefit of working in the Emporium.

I have chosen to emphasize teaching and course development in my claim for eligibility for promotion. I have also included a section on service to the instructional mission, highlighting both departmental committee work and service to other departments and the general community. Concerning evaluation data, I have been teaching online classes exclusively for 4 of the last 5 academic years. Since there is no instructor evaluation data for the online classes, I have included student evaluation information from my most recent five years in the classroom, beginning with 1998.

Candidate Statement

John Boyer

Geography

promotion to the rank of senior instructor

Candidate's Statement

For over a decade, I have worked hard to excel in my instructional responsibilities and continue to develop and evolve professionally here at Virginia Tech. As an Instructor, I have specifically focused on mastery in teaching, and in doing so I believe I have had significant impact on student learning during my tenure. Beyond the classroom, I have undertaken many activities which also have created positive impacts for the university: mentoring and advising undergraduates and graduates (including GTA's) from across campus, speaking to students groups in a variety of settings, and especially in course/curriculum development. I have made major investments in creating new courses, helping define the department's curriculum, and reformatting existing classes for larger class sizes. Moreover, even though research and publication are not expected dimensions of my position as Instructor, I have an accomplished record in these arenas during my time here at Virginia Tech.

The key words my contribution to Virginia Tech are accessibility and relevance. These themes apply not only to my contributions and accomplishments, but also encapsulate my teaching philosophy as well. In terms of teaching, this strategy is simple: make the topics and information accessible via all means possible, and make it relevant and meaningful to people's real lives. My job is actually quite easy because students have a natural tendency to want to learn about the world that is affecting their lives. Once I provide the structure to help them make sense of an unfathomable amount of information—thus, making it accessible—the students connect to it in their own personal lives—making it relevant.

However, as I have evolved to this position, I realize that it is also *myself* that I am making accessible and relevant to the VT community; I have mentored, counseled, assisted, advised, guided, and generally helped any and all students/faculty who have shown up on my doorstep. I have given professional and sometimes even fatherly advice to hundreds of grads and undergrads, spoken at countless functions of both a formal and informal nature, helped out on research projects, promoted and participated in study abroad offerings, and donated my time and talent to virtually every cause that has been presented to me. Much of what I do cannot be quantified in tables or charts or numerical distributions; by making myself accessible and real to the students, I am simply enriching their experiences and lives...perhaps best labeled as their "spirits"...in incalculable ways. I know that may sound sappy, but it is true.

My specific contributions to the department and the university have been both to increase the number of course offerings to VT students and also increase the size of these classes, thereby making them more available to our ever-increasing student body. As such, increasing the class offerings and class audiences epitomizes my goal to make geographic education more accessible to all.

But the accessibility does not end there: I have created on-line web pages, web blogs, and accompanying textbooks, all which strive to make course information readily available in a wide variety of formats, inside and outside university parameters. We live in a very interactive and visual age; thus, I use a variety of media in presenting course material, capturing the interest of my students and ultimately allowing me to reach those who may learn more optimally in different ways. I combine international music videos, live web interaction on specific topics, and a graphics-rich presentation with synchronized slide shows depicting physical and cultural images from around the world to enhance the learning process.

In addition, I have had great success using international films as an educational tool. Every semester I host "Geography Night at the Movies," which is an event open to the entire university. During these films, which have an average attendance of 300-500, students witness

other parts of the world through a familiar and engrossing medium. And for two to three hours each week, students immerse themselves into a different culture, hear the language, experience the landscape, and gain some small insight into the world outside US borders.

As noted above, I strive to take the accessibility to a personal level as well. I have been an “unofficial” advisor and mentor to several fellow faculty, dozens of grad students, and hundreds of undergrads. I have counseled folks from the VT community on class options, successful educational strategies, career goals, traveling abroad, teaching tactics, and generally just helping folks enrich both their experiences here at VT and their lives in general. I teach the basics. I speak in the vernacular. I make the material and myself accessible.

My other major objective in my instructor experience here at Virginia Tech has also been to make my work relevant. As pointed out by many students who have taken any/all of my courses, the material is simply what every person should know about the world. My courses have the flexibility to incorporate information from a wide variety of disciplines. As such, the first and strongest element of making things relevant to students is incorporating information from their fields of study and their interests into the class structure.

I have found students get very excited about the world when they understand what is being taught and see that they have a vested interest in it. I encourage them to associate geographic concepts with real world examples, and I constantly reinforce both with current events analysis. I use the daily news to help tie the seemingly non-related events of the world to students' personal lives--making interconnections that are mystifying to the uninformed and yet obvious to the enlightened. I have tirelessly incorporated new technologies, such as the web, blogs, and now even Podcasting, to achieve this task of staying current, fresh and relevant in my work.

I aim to help students experience the world more holistically, beyond the constrictions of textbooks and inert facts, guiding and supporting them towards becoming better citizens of the world. My goal is to get students through the doorway of understanding—how far into the room they go is up to them. In an increasingly interconnected world, becoming informed globally is an asset our students and citizens cannot be without. I have also tirelessly promoted study abroad opportunities to students (and even fellow faculty.) As such, I have personally been a part of five different programs which have taken over 120 students to over a dozen countries. I also work diligently to enlighten undergrads and grads in how to apply their geographic knowledge to better understand the “real” world outside the boundaries of the university.

I strive to make class material connected to reality, to make the students' experiences meaningful in the context of their future lives, and basically to be as “down to earth” as possible so that I can successfully communicate with students and fellow faculty alike. I'm as real as it gets.

In all things I do at Virginia Tech I continue to strive for accessibility and relevance. I believe I have achieved these goals in all the work that I have done in reformatting my classes, creating new courses, incorporating new educational technologies, advising students and faculty, giving talks and teaching classes, promoting study abroad experience, advising student groups, and creating a positive “spirit” and camaraderie in students and faculty across the university.

Candidate Statement

Jackson Evans

Biological Sciences

promotion to the rank of advanced instructor

I: Candidate Statement, My Role at Virginia Tech:

I am applying for promotion to Advanced Instructor for the following reasons. As my dossier will suggest I meet many of the criteria listed for the promotion from instructor to advance instructor. I have taught several courses since my appointment in 2000, this includes small courses (8 students) such as a graduate course related to teaching college level biology to large classes such as the Biological Science Orientation course (over 300 students), Principles of Biology Laboratories, presenting information regarding our department to groups of potential students and their parents. I teach a large lecture course, the Biology Orientation Seminar, each fall to all incoming biology majors and the book used for this course is the *Department of Biological Sciences Advising Guide*, which I revise and produce each year.

Evidence of my desire to further expand my professional development relative to teaching and advising comes from participation in conferences and workshops while a member of the Department of Biological Sciences. In addition, my PhD (Educational Psychology) studies focus on pedagogy, curriculum development and student assessment which will be completed in 2008. The topic of my dissertation is *Advanced Placement and its Role in College Readiness*.

I currently have a very active role in academic and career advising in the Department of Biological Sciences. I am responsible for advising approximately 400 students annually; mentoring several Teaching Assistants for my courses, and serving as faculty advisor for the biology, pharmacy, and optometry clubs. I am also an active member of the University Premedical / Dental Advisory committee, which reviews and prepares students for careers in medicine.

I contribute to administrative and service programs in several ways. I am Director of the Academic Advising Center in the department of Biological Sciences, serve on several departmental committees, currently represent the department as a Faculty Senator, and I am the co-coordinator of summer orientation as well as the May departmental commencement ceremony each year. In addition, I am a guest speaker at Kipps Elementary School and I am an invited speaker for a variety of venues within the university on an annual basis.

My career at Virginia Tech began in September of 2000 as an Undergraduate Advisor in the Department of Biological Sciences. My responsibilities quickly grew and now consist of teaching both undergraduate and graduate courses, advising and service. It is these areas, teaching, advising and service that are the basis for my promotion to Advanced Instructor.

My Philosophy:

The great educational philosopher John Dewey is often attributed with saying we need to give students something to do, not something to learn. This is the corner stone of my teaching philosophy. This type of approach to education fosters critical thinking, lifelong learning and provides the pathway necessary to allow students the opportunity to create knowledge which in turn enters their long term memory. I accomplish this through a classroom that is student-centered rather than teacher-centered. I believe that faculty who embrace a student-centered classroom both empower and motivate students. In my classroom I function as facilitator of the learning process, a guide to (rather than source of) the material at hand. My students create their own knowledge – it is my job to point, push, prod, and challenge them to become active learners and educated contributing members of society.

We are all familiar with teacher-centered classrooms. This type of learning atmosphere rewards students for memorizing small bits of information and then regurgitating them onto an exam. If they have memorized the facts they “do well” on the exam and therefore the course but, do not necessarily retain or integrate their new found knowledge with their prior knowledge. Research has demonstrated that approximately 15 minutes after an exam this memorized information is often purged from the memory, most specifically the short term memory and therefore never reaches its proper destination the long term memory. My job as an educator is to facilitate long-term retention of information so that it is at my students disposal, as research suggests, forever.

All of the students I work with are capable of success. In some cases, however, real life events impede this process. My students come to me with a wide variety of issues. These range from, what may be viewed as trivial, to others that are clearly very serious requiring immediate attention. All share a common thread – they are of critical importance to the student and regardless of their nature, can impede their ability to devote the necessary time and energy to their academics. As an advisor, it is my job / goal to work with the student to remove or alleviate any and all obstacles that lie in the path of success. Much like my teaching I view advising is a collaborative effort between the student and me.

My students at times enter college lacking adequate time management and study skills needed to be successful. When this occurs the students in question usually end the semester with less than flattering GPA's. At this time the student and I will meet to discuss their needs and to create a contract for success. The point of this contract is for the betterment of the student with the ultimate goal of providing them with the tools necessary to be successful.

When a student enters my office they have my complete undivided attention. Everything that I may be working on prior to their arrival is put on hold once they enter my office. At face value this may not seem to be overly important. I would argue that it is incredibly important to the student as they now know that I care and I am interested in whatever their issue may be. This simple gesture, allows me the opportunity to gain the trust and respect necessary and in so doing create a positive atmosphere needed to help my students achieve their fullest potential.

For my students I strive to be; a mentor, parent figure, or friend, or a combination thereof. Teaching and advising are my passions. I have seen too many times the negative effects that can be associated with someone who holds a position similar to mine that is not passionate about what they do. When students feel that their issues, regardless of what they are, are not valued by the professor / advisor positive change will not occur. My responsibilities in the Department of Biological Sciences are many and very diverse. The underlying driving force for everything I do is for the betterment of our students. My goal is to guide students to become critical thinkers and lifelong learners not just through my teaching but also through mentoring and advising. I do what I love and I love what I do and my students appreciate that. I was recently asked by a colleague for my job description which I summed up in two words – UT PROSIM.

Candidate Statement

Kurt Hoffman

Psychology

promotion to the rank of advanced instructor

I. Candidate's Statement

For eight years, it has been my job and privilege to impact the lives of students in the Psychology Department at Virginia Tech. I have tried to serve my department by covering a range of courses; I have prepared and taught seven different courses, and for one of them, our 4364 senior seminar, I have changed the material four times to cover different topics. In the past two years I have also served as the Director of Undergraduate Studies for my department. In this role, I have helped to advise our 1000 majors, overseen field studies, evaluated course substitution requests, assisted with orientation and open houses for new and prospective students, and served on several committees. While my advising and committee work has been gratifying, the classroom continues to be my primary focus.

My teaching has been consistently well-received by students, as my overall ratings in course evaluations are often 3.8 and 3.9. In addition, for the past two spring semesters, I was selected as a "Favorite Faculty" member in an annual program sponsored by the Department of Residential Life; in April of 2007 I received a similar recognition from students, as they voted for me to attend a faculty appreciation reception hosted by the Student Associates of the Virginia Tech Alumni Association. My peers have also rewarded my teaching efforts, by selecting me for a College of Science Certificate of Teaching Excellence in 2006, and an Alumni Teaching Award and induction into the Academy of Teaching Excellence in 2007.

As an educator, my goals are to excite, instill knowledge, and empower. If all three goals are met, I am confident that my students will become open-minded and very capable adults. For me, exciting students begins with the first courses they take. In lower-division classes, I want students to be as excited as I am, and to hear them say "*That's so cool.*" I never forget that my classes are attended by young adults, who want to hear about clinical psychology, sleep, adolescence, and other topics that directly pertain to them. I am most successful when I use these kinds of topics to illustrate the concepts that I want them to know. Another way to generate enthusiasm in students is to keep my own interest level high by constantly incorporating new topics and ideas in my courses.

Instilling knowledge involves a myriad of factors. I strive for accuracy, thoroughness, and organization in all of my lectures. Moreover, undergraduates need to appreciate the difference between what is known, what is debated, and what is yet to be discovered. Whenever possible, I offer multiple perspectives, and point out how they complement or conflict with each other. Even outside the classroom, I give students multiple viewpoints and encourage them to think for themselves. Many of my students and advisees want to know about careers in psychology. In our discussions, I try to get them to focus on what they like, and just as importantly don't like, in their coursework. Then I offer some ideas, and point them to other sources so they can link their current interests to future goals.

Thirdly, I believe students need multiple outlets to convey what they know. The most important thing a professor does is present challenges, and help students gain confidence to meet those challenges. In introductory classes, I use discussion and multiple-format exams to help students explore their abilities. In my smaller and more advanced senior seminars, we read and discuss journal articles, and write position papers. There are no lectures. Some students find this unfamiliar format disconcerting at first, but within weeks they are much less intimidated by challenging material. They also show substantial improvement in their ability to present their opinions clearly and persuasively. I strongly believe that any positive strides they make in formulating and defending educated opinions will prove invaluable to them regardless of the career they pursue after leaving our campus.

My primary goal during my initial years at Virginia Tech was to offer stimulating courses for the undergraduates at this university. Now my goal has changed somewhat; I want to help prepare students for their post-graduate lives. I am increasingly aware of the difficulties our majors have as they reach their Senior year and need to decide what to do next. For most, the choices are daunting, and they have to gauge not only what they want, but what they are qualified to do. I am very interested in trying to help them make these assessments, and learning as much as I can about specific careers and opportunities within them. For eight years I have tried to instill knowledge and critical thinking, as all professors do; now I want to help students figure out what they will do with that knowledge.

Candidate Statement

Carol Papillon

Human Nutrition, Foods, and Exercise

promotion to the rank of senior instructor

I. Candidate's Statement

I began my position in the Department of Human Nutrition, Foods and Exercise in 1996. Prior to arriving at Virginia Tech I worked for 13 years as a registered dietitian (with renal patients at the University of Kentucky, in the burn unit and clinical administration at Duke University Medical Center and in wellness and nutrition counseling in Minnesota and the New River Valley) and 3 years as an instructor (University of Minnesota-Duluth and Mount Mary College). As a practicing dietitian I participated in the education process for future dietitians as a clinical instructor and then facilitating student experiences at Duke University Medical Center. The position as Dietetic Internship Director/Instructor in the Department of Human Nutrition, Foods and Exercise (HNFE) at Virginia Tech was a natural progression in my professional goal to educate future dietitians. I initially entered this position as Interim Dietetic Internship Director during 1996-1997 and I was permanently positioned as the Director/Instructor in the following year. In addition to directing and teaching in the accredited Dietetic Internship Program, I instruct and advise in the accredited undergraduate dietetics program and actively participate in the curriculum development and oversight of the department.

My teaching philosophy is reflected in the mission that I established for the Virginia Tech Dietetic Internship Program - *to prepare confident, competent entry-level dietitians who can balance evidence-based practice with client-centered care*. Dietitians must have a solid understanding of the research-based evidence, an understanding of nutrition science and a comfort level with critiquing research. The other part of this mission is to understand the target audience be it a community group, an individual or an administrator. Dietitians must know how to use their knowledge to effectively impact and influence others. I seek to design an educational environment that develops the skills to keep their knowledge current and impact their audience. The final piece of my teaching philosophy is for students to learn how to demonstrate the impact they have made. So in summary, my goal is for students to have knowledge, know how to impact and influence others with that knowledge and be able to show that they have made a difference.

I seek to involve students actively and to individualize and apply the message within each class session. By actively using the knowledge in the classroom, they can later make an impact in the real world. For example, the interns are assigned to lead a journal club by selecting a relevant article and then facilitating a discussion with their peers. This activity allows them to critique the research but also be a leader, a skill that will benefit them in future roles. A recent graduate reported that she began a journal club in her workplace during the first year after graduation. Another aspect of my teaching philosophy is to design a plan and communicate it well in advance to the students so they are prepared to actively participate in their own learning. Students keep journals to help them reflect on the advanced reading. As a result the students are more likely to participate in the discussion.

My role as Dietetic Internship Director revolves around teaching. To meet the mission of the program described above, interns meet for one full day of class and work in sites for 4 days each week. Each class involves a hands-on activity to allow skill development. Outcome measurements (registration exam rate, employer and alumni surveys) demonstrate that all goals for the program are met through effective program management and teaching. The program has a 95% pass rate among graduates on the registration exam compared to a national rate of 84%.

Curriculum development is a significant part of my role as Dietetic Internship Director. I have designed it to be innovative. Ours is the only program that has two locations allowing the program to reflect professional practices both in the urban area (Northern Virginia/Washington DC) and the suburban/rural area (New River and Roanoke Valleys). To meet each intern's

needs, last year we placed interns at 70 different agencies, utilized 125 clinical instructors, and involved 78 speakers. These innovations have led the program to become very competitive with a high application rate and a strong group of interns each year. Last year the age range of the class was 22-60 years and the individual learning needs were met for each of these interns. I have developed and updated the curriculum over the past 12 years to meet the standards required of the accrediting agency, the Commission on Dietetic Registration of the American Dietetic Association. I was responsible for starting the second location of the program in Northern Virginia and adapting the curriculum to reflect the needs of that geographical location. Annually updates are made to reflect changes in the profession and feedback from a variety of constituents (clinical instructors, alumni, current students, and others). Feedback from employers of our internship graduates unanimously indicate they would hire another graduate and that, in most cases, our graduates are stronger than other dietitians they have hired.

Scholarship in teaching is demonstrated by the 2007 national American Dietetic Association Award; "Public Policy and Advocacy Award in Dietetics Education". The program was also recognized in "2000 Summit: Best Practices in Dietetics Education", a published forum of the American Dietetic Association. I have shared educational approaches with other educators through presentations, posters and individual contact.

Within the undergraduate program, I teach an upper-level dietetics elective course, *Experiential Approach to Nutrition Therapy*. This course is taught using active and individualized learning. Students learn and apply skills through counseling individuals within the university community (students, staff and faculty). The independent study I teach guides the students to expand on the skills they learn in this course. Students receive feedback on their counseling skills through client review sessions. Surveys of clients show that student nutrition counselors are effective. Alumni indicate they have benefited from the experience in being more effective dietetic interns.

Advising is a form of teaching through guiding undergraduates to prepare themselves to be successful after graduation. Annually I mentor approximately 45 advisees in academic and career advising. I also advise 15-16 dietetic interns annually by locating experiences that will meet their interests and learning needs. As they near completion of the program, I connect them with resources/alumni as they seek employment. I continue to be an advising resource to alumni of the program and tell my advisees that my advising does not end when they leave the program. Having alumni throughout the state and country has allowed me to connect students and interns with professional experiences.

An experienced instructor is expected to mentor new instructors and graduate students. I have had the opportunity to do so at various levels. I have guided undergraduate and graduate teaching assistants, graduate students who are teaching dietetics courses, faculty members, and the Northern Virginia Site Director of the Dietetic Internship. I also provide guidance to program clinical instructors so they can effectively guide interns to learn skills in the workplace.

Working on alumni development this past year has given me an opportunity to expand the teaching role in a unique way. The efforts have been varied including an alumni reception at the state dietitians meeting and a departmental newsletter. Alumni are now receiving HNFE updates and are making connections with the department to support our educational mission. We have received numerous contacts from alumni offering summer internship experiences or jobs for new graduates.

I look forward to continuing my role as instructor in HNFE, teaching, guiding our strong dietetic education programs, and supporting the educational mission through mentoring new faculty.

Candidate Statement

Linda Powers

Mathematics

promotion to the rank of senior instructor

Linda Powers Statement

Mathematics teachers will tell you that many students come to the subject with the attitude "I'm not good at math." They think that there is only one correct way to do any problem and don't want to look "stupid" by attempting the problem the wrong way. As a result they do nothing. If the teacher asks a question to the class, there is no response since students don't want other students to think they don't know anything.

If there is one thing I want to accomplish in my classes, it's to break through this attitude and allow students to freely try different methods even if they fail. Failure is part of the learning process. If one method doesn't succeed, then try another one. I want my students to feel comfortable in my classes so that they will speak up, ask questions, and answer – even if that answer turns out not to work. In classes under 100, I learn their names. I find they appreciate this, do feel more comfortable, and respond more.

Because I want my students to have a sense of exploration, I was eager to participate in the introduction to reform calculus to our courses in 1994. Reform calculus uses the idea that students should see a concept algebraically, numerically and graphically. Students can realize that there may be more than one way to think of a concept or idea. I have tried to bring this approach to every class that I have taught. Since I began work at Virginia Tech, I have taught a variety of classes – precalculus, liberal arts, business and engineering calculus, linear algebra, and discrete math. I have taught traditional lecture classes, large lecture classes, classes that used group work and classes that used technology such as Matlab and Mathematica. In the past 5 years I have taught 40 classes with an overall student rating of 3.54. The departmental average for these same classes was 3.36.

As a course coordinator for both Math 1206 and Math 1224, I have mentored graduate student teachers – attending their classes, advising them on tests and classroom procedures, and sharing my materials. I have found that recitation teachers in Math 1224 are not used to guiding students in group work and need help in adjusting to teaching this way.

I have participated in other course development in addition to reform calculus. A recent course that I have helped restructure is Math 1224 (Vector Geometry) with Dr. William Greenberg. We wrote Mathematica quizzes and tests for the course and redesigned it for large classes with one lecture and one recitation per week. I have participated in the transition to the Math Emporium since its inception in 1997 by both teaching and developing courses that use it. I was a member of the team that was awarded the 1999 XCaliber Award. I have also worked over three summers on projects to put Math 1525, 1526, 1535, and 1536 online and to put Math 1205 quizzes online.

From 1997 to 2001 I was coordinator of Calculus Readiness Week which was a program for students who might not otherwise qualify for the engineering calculus sequence. Students would come for one of two one-week sessions in August to work in groups under a graduate student tutor to review algebra, trigonometry, geometry, and precalculus. They would take a test at the end of the week. If they passed, they could enroll in Math 1205 in the fall semester. I wrote the materials used, trained the graduate student tutors and helped with all of the arrangements (residence, dining halls, etc.)

In May 2003 I became the Summer Orientation Advisor and in September 2006, I became Director of Undergraduate Activities. In these jobs I advise incoming math majors on the best schedule for their first semester and work with them to register for classes, answer any questions that they or their parents have before arriving at Tech in August, help them decide what math option to choose, and also advise other incoming freshmen on transfer credits for math and on eligibility to enter engineering calculus. I keep departmental forms for new students up to date and am in charge of the Calculus Readiness test given to students who want to enroll in engineering math, but whose background is insufficient. In addition, I am the departmental representative to the Academic Support Roundtable and a member of the Early Alert System subgroup.

Candidate Statement

Cheryl Ruggiero

English

promotion to the rank of senior instructor

I. Candidate's statement.

It was a snowy December in 1973 when Mike Squires asked if I'd consider contacting VPI&SU English Department Head Wilson Snipes about teaching Freshman English in the upcoming Winter Quarter of 1974. Mike had learned, as we chatted while watching our respective children play, of my Creative Writing BA and my MA in TEFL (Teaching English as a Foreign Language), and he also knew that the Department needed someone at the last minute for the Winter and Spring quarters. A few weeks later, I carried my linguistics study into four sections of ENGL 1122, and my love of language and of the students I met have formed the core of my teaching ever since.

I am fascinated with how humans make language and how language makes us human. I am most rewarded when I can lead students into writing experiences and see them discover how they, and others, make life with language, how they can develop the power to affect their own lives and those of others through writing. Throughout our department's many re-envisionings of our composition pedagogy, through focuses on Modes, Literary Analysis, Argument, Epistemics, Cultural Criticism, Inquiry, and now Rhetorical Awareness—each of which has inspired and invigorated my teaching—I continue to work from two basic principles:

- studying how language works is as complex, intellectually challenging, and vital to our growth as any great scientific or humanistic pursuit;
- students learn to write through extensive writing and feedback.

In the thirty-three-and-a-half years (with a two-year break in service) since that first Winter Quarter, I've taught composition, literature, linguistics, grammar, and technical writing at Virginia Tech, and all these courses have been grounds for a happy confluence of these two principles.

As I have served in administrative positions—GTA Advisor, GTA Advising Coordinator, Writing Center Director, and now Assistant Director of Composition, as well as Assistant Department Chair and Scheduler—and as I've worked on task forces of various kinds for the Department and University, I have found that my administrative work enables others to carry out the instruction that is still at the heart of what I do. I may be placing students and scheduling classes, but I'm doing these things so that students will have opportunities to see and to put into writing the wonders and powers of language.