

January, 2024

Dear members of the Standing Committee on Evaluation, Promotion, and Tenure,

I am pleased to submit this portfolio in support of my post-tenure review. My digital portfolio will give an overview of my achievements, contributions, and growth since achieving tenure.

The post-tenure period has been a time of radical growth for me as an educator and administrator. Almost immediately after receiving tenure, I was elected Division Chair for VPA. I really liked serving in that position until the academic restructure occurred, and the position shifted to another colleague. Throughout that time, I felt like we were really building intentional community and I was able to help the Division move forward with some of its goals. I'm proud of the community we were able to build and the work we were able to do. On the Department level, we were asked to trim our offerings. This gave us an opening to revise the program to be more efficient. I took the opportunity to redesign our foundational courses to better equip our students for the demands they faced as they moved through the program and beyond. I revised our Art History course offerings to move away from three chronological courses with a Western approach, to a two-course thematic, global approach. We are in the second year of offering these courses and feedback from students and community members enrolled has been really good. I'm looking forward to adjusting and refining these courses as time moves forward.

I work really hard to cultivate a sense of rigor and trust in the studio classroom and it is reassuring to me that students are feeling seen. One student commented on their IOTAs that I should continue "being such an amazing professor! (Karen) also creates such a great space to work in, there are boundaries, but we are still free to learn to become artists... I was also struggling mentally, (which) was affecting my work but (Karen) kept pushing me and encouraging me and I ultimately ended up doing much better. She never gave up or got frustrated with me. She worked with me one on one when I really needed that extra help and helped me succeed. I can't thank her enough."

My scholarship is split into two major categories: lectures and conferences and creating and working with communities. As Graceland is a teaching institution, much of my scholarship falls into the pedagogy category during the academic year. I have presented at several CAA conferences in the past few years including 2019 where I co-chaired a panel with Ellen Mueller on "Social Practice and Service Learning," and in 2020 where I presented "Cultivating Social Engagement at a Small, Rural Liberal Arts University and Beyond." This spring I am chairing a panel on "Mysticism in Art" and "Zine Culture." In 2021, I was selected to presentation at SECAC, Southeastern College Art Conference on Art History and Social Engagement. When the conference was canceled due to the pandemic, I applied to present this research at the Midwest Art History Society Conference in Houston, TX, in 2022. My presentation, "Not Waiting on the World to Change: Finding Peace, Fight, and Voice Through Social Engagement," was accepted. I have regularly presented at the biennial Foundations in Art Theory and Education (FATE)

conference, my favorite pedagogy conference, on topics including “art and activism” in 2019, “inclusion” in 2021, and most recently, “ideation” in 2023. My community work and the largest portion of my artistic practice happens in the summer. In this practice, I have been active in engaging communities in conversations resulting in large scale murals. As a socially engaged artist, my work focusses on shared authorship and co-creation of the work throughout the process. I often take the lead in a mural project and act as a teaching artist to students and communities. I’m excited to share my work with you all.

In addition to the work I do in the Art Department, some of the most rewarding service I do at Graceland is as part of the Honors Program Council, and as a member of the Sustainable Social Justice Committee. These committees directly affect our students in positive ways. On a community level, I worked with Max Pitt and the Community Development club on a mural downtown during the pandemic. We have just been approved funds for another mural and monarch waystation downtown Lamoni this Spring in collaboration with this group and the Sustainability Club. In the Spring of 2023, I worked with the Lamoni Food Pantry, Gwen Simpson, and my students to create an inviting mural inside their new building downtown. I have collaborated with community member Gary Reese several times connecting our printmaking students with Liberty Hall in which were did a silkscreen event, a fundraiser for the Lamoni Coliseum Theater, and most recently a print of City Hall to be used as gifts to our community. On a national level I have maintained an active role in our national arts organization, the College Art Association (CAA) for the past five years. I served on the Education Committee where I chaired a subcommittee producing CAA Conversations, a pedagogy podcast. I regularly perform portfolio reviews with graduate students at the conference to help them prepare for the job market and am currently serving on the Services to Artist Committee preparing sessions and events to support artists at the conference and throughout the year. In November, I was elected to co-chair the Partners in the Parks Committee at the National Collegiate Honors Council, a program I have worked with for the past two years alongside Brian White in the summers. It is a role I am very excited about serving in.

I’ve always felt include and welcomed by the community here at Graceland and in Lamoni. I have received a great deal of personal and professional support from my colleagues and friends here, which I am so grateful for. I can only hope that I have been and can continue to be a colleague and friend that reciprocates this generosity in an authentic way back into our community. Thank you for taking the time to review my portfolio and I look forward to our continued work together.

Sincerely,  
Karen Gergely