SOUTHWESTERN
AN OREGON COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Date: March 10, 2020

To: Ali Mageehon, Vice President of Instruction

From: Rod Keller

RE: **Administrative Evaluation:** Ben Holt 2nd Year Tenure Track

The purpose and scope of the peer observation and evaluation is defined in Article 16: 16.2 and 16.4B of the faculty collective bargaining agreement. All tenure track, visiting, and lecturer faculty members will be evaluated annually. The scope of the evaluation includes multiple indices as outlined under Faculty Performance Standards in the Faculty Evaluation Handbook. In addition to reviewing the faculty performance standards, the Administrative Evaluation will include information from the peer observation and peer evaluation committee for those faculty who are tenure track, visiting, or lecturer.

Tenured faculty are evaluated on a three-year rotation, per Article 16.5. The peer evaluation committee is optional for tenured faculty. The administrative evaluation will be based on the Faculty Performance Standards outlined in the Faculty Evaluation Handbook.

Discipline: Math

Members of the Peer Review Committee: Sean Hutcherson (chair), Lou Rushton, Jed Wyman

Comments from the Dean or Director related to Faculty Performance Standards as noted in observations, student evaluations, portfolio documents, and faculty performance.

Teaching:

Ben is steadily becoming a master teacher. As he concludes his second year of teaching at Southwestern, he continues to demonstrate the principles he outlines in his exceptional teaching philosophy (http://holt.blue/). Although his philosophy was highlighted last year in his administrative review, it bears repeating because it continues to direct Ben's overall teaching:

- **Establish and Maintain Community in the Classroom.** "A centerpiece of my teaching philosophy is that active learning requires engaged minds who are willing and prepared to discuss and present ideas to other students. . . . The

completion of what I try to accomplish in lecture only happens when my students begin to learn from each other."

- **Set Clear Standards and Expectations at the Outset.** "Automating the homework and exam creation process has enabled me both to take a practice-until-you- get-it approach, and to make learning outcomes clear from the very beginning."
- **Put the Means of Meeting Standards and Expectations Directly into the Hands of Students.** "Students have unlimited opportunities for exam practice by being able to take as many practice exams as they wish. This approach has two very beneficial consequences: 1) from the very beginning, students are presented the standard to which they will be held, and 2) students have a clear path for practicing skills until they master them."
- **Guided Practice is Essential to Success.** "My experience with young learners has taught me that, in general, students really do want to learn, and if we make our expectations exceedingly clear, and we show students exactly what they need to do, students will rise to meet those expectations. This is why every topic we cover in class has an active component where students attempt the kind of work which they eventually will have to do on their own with individual help from their instructor."
- **Utilize Free Resources for the Benefit of Students.** "I created . . . a free, easy-to-use, online statistical software package which enables students to easily perform many common statistical procedures without having to purchase an expensive software package, and without having to make a significant investment of time to learn free, but less intuitive, packages."
- **Use Dynamic Tools to Illustrate Dynamic Ideas.** "Web-based technology has enabled me to impart a visceral understanding of such delicate ideas in a way which simply is not possible with a white-board."
- **Emphasize and Celebrate the Interdisciplinary Nature of Learning.** "From applications I have developed for my students, to popular websites I have created and still maintain, developing online tools has drawn upon a large cross-section of the skills, concepts, and tastes which I acquired in both my undergraduate and graduate studies: research skills, mathematics, graphic design, computer programming, a love of language, a solid understanding of general grammatical concepts, the pedagogy of reading, business administration, psychology, communication studies, and even history."
- **Mathematics is Essential to Being an Informed Citizen.** "I try to motivate my students to learn mathematics not only from the standpoint of being well rounded and broadly educated, but also through the lens of becoming informed and able participants in a society that demands a citizenry that knows how to warily interpret both verbal and numerical arguments."

Ben is a critically reflective teacher who at the end of each term analyzes the successes and challenges he and his students face. He then thoughtfully constructs and adapts activities, approaches, and assessments targeted to improve teaching and learning. For example, for fall 2019, he first implemented a fully flipped classroom for MTH 243 and

MTH 251. He either created 30-minute lecture videos or utilized OER videos for students to view and study prior to class then used the class time for students to engage with each other and the curriculum. He modeled sample homework problems before students partnered with others. Ben recognized that as early as the fourth week, students stopped watching the lecture videos and relied more heavily on the class interaction to learn the material. Their performance began to decline, and he would insert mini-lectures into the class time to assist students. Based on Ben's experience, students' grades, and course evaluations, Ben has decided to move towards a more traditional classroom supplemented with lecture videos and in-class group interaction, especially in MTH 251.

Ben is an exceptionally creative, organized, and hands-on teacher. He has created a professional, thorough math teaching website with free access to software for math students to learn, practice, and assess learning. Ben willingly and freely shares his resources not only with his own students, but also with faculty if they desire, and with internet users.

An example of his innovation involves his MTH 243. Ben explains: "Over the course of the term we did several activities, the most successful of which was having students collect data on campus. Each student gathered specimens of ivy leaves from around the Tioga building and analyzed the ratios of lengths of the longest middle vein to the shortest vein in each leaf. We used this data repeatedly to make histograms and box plots, as well as to better understand measures of center (mean, median, and mode) and measures of spread (quartiles and standard deviation). Whether the activity involved ivy leaves, the heights of the class members, or the amount of spare change in each class member's pocket, I got a very real sense that analyzing data that we actually collected gave students a more visceral feel of the basic tools of descriptive statistics. This is one of the big successes I had this term. The fruit of the flipped model this term was the time we gained to do these in-class data-collection activities."

My own observations of Ben's teaching reflect his teaching philosophy. He has a calm, confident approach to teaching. The students, therefore, also appear calm and confident. He keeps the class moving at a steady, deliberate pace, and his students are engaged. They remain focused and on task for their entire class. He does a great job of breaking process down into step by step. He continues to move forward and backward among the students. He provides them with formulae to assist them with their calculations. His students know *why* and *how* they are doing something not just *what* to do. Students are comfortable with his a website holt.blue. This is such a valuable resource. Students come to class prepared with homework assignments where they've practiced the concepts on their own. He holds them responsible by having them direct the discussion based on their work, but he also uses that as an opportunity to evaluate their understanding and performance to assist them with additional explanations, clarifications, instruction, and practice.

Ben's peer review committee comment that his teaching style is "energetic, well-paced, compelling, and clear. He provide[s] information with an economical focus of which clarity was the key component." He holds well-prepared sessions, links content to prior lessons, provides careful guided practice, states clearly high expectations, and covers material from multiple perspectives.

His committee have observed that Ben's lessons blend new and material smoothly "This could be seen in the impressive degree of understanding exhibited by the students. Student questions, of which there were several, all involved an in-depth understanding of complex ideas that had been touched on in preceding lessons." The committee finds his classroom and institutional service well planned, efficient, and collaborative.

Fall 2019 students share comments about Ben on the course evaluations:

> *"I really enjoyed this class and I do believe it is because of the way Mr. Holt presents the material and the way that he conducts his class. His love for statistics and mathematics in general is obvious."*
>
> *"Online material is comprehensive and highly accessible."*
>
> *"Tough class but makes it easier with a great professor and his love and passion for the class."*

Some students were frustrated with the flipped classroom concept, especially with the required lecture videos; however, Ben addressed those issues in the next term by doing mini lectures and doing more lectures in class.

> *"I think the issue with this class I have is the fact that we have to watch videos of the lectures instead of lecture being in person. Not everyone has the time to take an extra 30 minutes to an extra hour or longer to watch a video and then take even more time on the actual assignment. So I think lecture period should be used for lectures and going over how to do the problems instead of over view then here's some problems. . . ."*
>
> *"My main complaint about the course is that the homework load is very heavy with one 30 minute lecture to watch and another 30-60 minutes of problems to do every night. I am also not a huge fan of the format of watching lectures at home and doing group work in class. I'd prefer in-class lectures and taking questions on the lecture/homework without group work."*

Ben continues to mature as a teacher.

Advising:

Ben is one of our first faculty members to have opted out from advising. Instead, he commits his time to working in the Laker Commons as a math tutor to his and other students. This option works well for him, and he is able to be a valuable resource to many more students that the limited number he would have advised.

Assessment:

Ben is current with his math outcome assessment reports. His reports are complete, thorough, and measured. For instance, for fall 2019, in MTH 95, he solving, simplifying, and manipulating algebraic expressions and equations; organizing data into meaningful, useful graphs while critically extracting meaningful data from provided graphs; applying algebraic, graphic, and numeric techniques to frame, visualize, and answer applications across a multiplicity of disciplines; and demonstrating numerical proficiency, tabulation, and computation of standard operations.

Last year, Ben and the math department coordinated efforts to focus assessment on MTH 111. Ben looks closely at his own course assessment tools. For example, he embeds assessment problems in both versions of his MTH 243 exams questions. He then analyzes the two different questions to determine consistency and reliability.

Communications Effectiveness:

Ben consciously exhibits effective communication skills. Much of that communication is evident in how his website is also a math teaching and learning site for multiple levels of users. He teaches a wide range of math courses from developmental and career math to college level math. He seamlessly slips into whatever level of understanding the students need.

Ben is also an effective communicator with the department, division, and administration. He tends to be reserved, yet he willingly participates and contributes to any discussion.

Diversity and Inclusion:

Ben’s greatest contribution to diversity and inclusion is his website holt.blue. He freely makes his materials accessible to students without cost or commitment. Students continue to have access to his materials long after they have taken his class. Cost does not impact his students. He also continues to research and develop online resources for faculty and students.

Professional Learning and Scholarship:

Ben spends much of his professional learning and scholarship developing and enhancing his website. He has also presented his master’s thesis research topic and on cryptography at Southwestern’s colloquia. He attends and participates at ORMATYC conferences, and he’s considering presenting there in the future. He is also considering a solo article in a peer reviewed publication.

He continues to be a valuable source and partner as the math department studies and refines math placement scores to increase student success in developmental and gateway math courses.

Collegiality and Service:

Ben willingly participates and contributes his talents and abilities to the department and division at Southwestern. He attends all department and division meetings. He is easy to work with, gentle, and has a clear voice of reason. He works well with colleagues within the department as well as other across campus.

Ben currently serves on the faculty senate instructional design committee.

He also willingly works with students to develop and RC classes for students who need a particular course for graduation. He has generously used his website to become the foundation for an online MTH 105 course.

Summary and Recommendations:

Ben is a strong, organized, thoroughly prepared teacher who is developing an understanding of the courses' purposes and content. He effectively identifies students' abilities and needs and adapts his teaching to reach as many students as possible. He begins to understand and demonstrates Southwestern's vision, core themes, and values. He's a valuable contributing member of the college.

Ben continues to share his abilities and excellent website work with campus in multiple capacities. Through his efforts, his strengths as a teacher become evident through various modalities.

I recommend Ben pace himself because we and our students need him for the long haul.

Ben's committee includes this recommendation: "In conclusion, the peer evaluation committee commends the job that Ben does teaching his classes. We unhesitatingly recommend that Ben be give a positive evaluation for the 2019-2020 academic year."

I also recommend a positive review.

Signed Chair Report

Date: _____

Faculty Signature:

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Faculty Comments: I would like to express my gratitude for the opportunity to be a part of the Southwestern family, as well as my appreciation for my colleagues and coworkers who have been so tremendously helpful in getting to know the institution. I feel very comfortable, happy, and welcome here at Southwestern, and I am glad to know that my efforts are well received and supported.

Dean/Director Signature:

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Vice President of Instruction Signature:

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