Letter of Support for Marge Maxwell, Ph.D.

Marge Maxwell served as my dissertation chair from early 2011 to May of 2012. Due to the importance of this position, I engaged in an extensive vetting of possible candidates before selecting Dr. Maxwell. Upon interviewing doctoral students and graduates, I heard consistently that Dr. Maxwell was highly recommended, and that she would hold my nose to the grindstone until the job was done.

My experience in working with Dr. Maxwell was exceptional. From our first meeting, she demonstrated the qualities that make her an excellent mentor. She was able to make a quick read of what I required, and was able to say what needed to be said to guide me in the proper direction. She responded quickly and decisively to communications, and made herself available for meetings and consults in spite of a very full calendar. The importance of this rare quality cannot be overestimated.

She has a strong command of the technology tools available to facilitate the academic process. Throughout our work together, she was able to suggest and implement options for resource organization, conferencing, editing, and collaborative writing that streamlined processes and produced a higher quality of work. It was a pleasure to work with a professor who was leading and expanding my technology skills, and I continue to benefit professionally from the knowledge I gained.

Her advising throughout my program was well informed and thorough. She was knowledgeable about the steps required to move me forward, and fulfilled each of her responsibilities well in advance of deadlines. As a result, I encountered no administrative or program-related complications.

Dr. Maxwell's guidance in my initial research design was invaluable. She steered me away from a topic that might have been political and problematic, and assisted me in narrowing a topic that was both important and manageable. She asked excellent questions that lead me to improve the rigor of my design. Her research experience allowed her to alert me in advance to some possible complications, and saved me weeks of work and frustration. Her support during my data collection, analysis, and dissertation writing was unflagging. She consistently gave me excellent and thorough feedback on my work.
She decisively managed the dissertation committee, keeping everyone informed and on task so there were no surprises or problems. Having heard numerous accounts from other doctoral students about the pitfalls that arise in a poorly managed committee, I count myself extremely fortunate to have had Dr. Maxwell at the helm.

Dr. Maxwell’s drive and influence did not end with the completion of my dissertation. She welcomed me as a colleague and we embarked on the process of editing and submitting manuscripts for publication. Her knowledge of this process was important in encouraging and guiding me in a new and intimidating academic area. We successfully published two articles in peer-reviewed journals within seven months of my degree completion. She made a notoriously difficult and complex process quite manageable, and I value highly the strong start she gave to my academic career.

Throughout my dissertation process, Dr. Maxwell provided an additional and important lesson. She modeled a life/work balance that was reasonable and fulfilling. In this as much as in the academic lessons she shared, Dr. Maxwell provided me with lifelong skills and attitudes that will serve me well.

Dr. Maxwell has my full support in her pursuit of promotion to Full Professor. Her research knowledge, responsiveness, decisiveness, advising ability, and mentoring are exemplary. Her high expectations combined with her consistent and highly skilled support makes her a valuable asset to the doctoral program and to Western Kentucky University.

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