

3/17/25

Dear Members of the Search Committee,

I write to express enthusiastic interest in the position of Chair in the Department of English and Technical Communication. My leadership journey began with my role as Faculty Senate officer (2020-2025) and expanded with my involvement in Intercampus Faculty Cabinet (2022-2025). Most recently, I had the privilege of serving as Acting Chair of my department (Fall 2024). Throughout these roles, I have remained committed to shared governance, passionate about mentorship, and dedicated to advancing both teaching and research excellence. I am confident in my ability to lead our department through its next phase of innovation and continued success.

My leadership philosophy is grounded in mentorship and collaboration. I am committed to creating a supportive environment where our faculty feel empowered to pursue their goals with confidence, including and, perhaps most importantly, achieving promotion and tenure. As Department Chair, I will prioritize supporting faculty in their professional development, ensuring they have the resources and guidance needed to excel in teaching, research and professional development, and service. To do so, I plan to initiate one-on-one conversations with department faculty to understand their needs for professional success.

In my role as Faculty Senate Officer, especially during my year as FS President (2023-2024), I gained valuable insight into university-wide governance and developed effective strategies in advocating for faculty. I worked steadfastly to defend faculty rights, fostering inclusion of faculty and staff voices in important campus decision-making processes. As president, I successfully led several key initiatives, including co-chairing task forces for four Strategic Initiatives: Academic Excellence, Employer and Employee Excellence, Student Well-Being and Success, and Enrollment Growth. Our efforts resulted in the inclusion of faculty as well as administrative points-of-contact for each Strategic Initiative and greater faculty input into the new campus Strategic Plan. I also worked closely with Missouri S&T Staff Council, establishing closer cross-campus communication and understanding between faculty and staff. For this work, I was recognized with a **Certificate of Appreciation from Staff Council in 2023**. I also participated in regular meetings with upper administration, where we discussed critical campus topics such as budget, enrollment growth, shared governance, and tenure and promotion policy. These experiences allowed me to contribute directly to shaping the university's strategic direction and provided me with a strong understanding of how to navigate complex institutional challenges while promoting shared governance.

In addition, my experience on Intercampus Faculty Cabinet (2022-2025) has given me the opportunity to work closely with faculty leaders across the UM system's four campuses (Mizzou, UMSL, and UMKC), including UM president Mun Choi and the Board of Curators. In this capacity, I have been able to ensure that our campus's goals—and by extension the goals of the ETC department—align with broader university and system priorities, fostering productive relationships between departmental and administrative units. As a member of IFC, I participate in monthly meetings with the UM president. Furthermore, in more social meetings with the president and members of the Board of Curators, I am able to take the pulse of key influencers at the UM system level and I use these opportunities to include other ETC faculty members, providing opportunities to present at the UM system level the important work we do as a department.

As Acting departmental Chair (Fall 2024), I worked closely with the Vice Provost and Dean of the College of Arts, Sciences, and Education (CASE), learning how to balance fiscal responsibility with departmental excellence. My key funding priorities as Department Chair will focus on securing resources to support faculty needs, specifically funding for conference and research travel for all active research faculty—Tenure Track as well as, when appropriate, NTT faculty—utilizing all applicable campus resources. I understand the importance of innovative research, having been PI and co-PI on several external and internal grants (see my CV for details). I have also balanced service and administrative work with an active publishing history, with three books released between 2021 and 2025. One of these, *Breakfast Cereal: A Global History*, is a foray into public scholarship, a timely area of engaged scholarly work I will encourage at the department level. For my research efforts, I received the **2023 CASE Faculty Research** and the **College Faculty Research** awards. Furthermore, I worked to enhance opportunities to advance the department's innovative pedagogy, as demonstrated by our recent and ongoing PIT-UN and IGSET grants. As an ACUE credentialed educator, I understand the critical importance of pedagogical development. I also worked with campus IT to ensure access to relevant technology upgrades that support teaching and research, such as in our smart home technology UX studies. As Department Chair, I will prioritize leveraging all available external and internal resources to further the department's growth and opportunities for innovative scholarship.

Through my roles as Faculty Senate Officer and Acting Chair, I regularly engaged with Deans, specifically in CASE, as well as the Provost, Chancellor, and President. In these roles, I have consistently stood up for the needs of my department, college, and campus—asking critical questions and upholding our shared governance principles. Such a proactive stance will be invaluable in my role as Department Chair. I have worked to ensure that faculty voices are heard and that our department's priorities are represented at the highest levels—such as negotiating for an NTT line in composition, meeting with and providing valuable feedback for finalists to the Biological Sciences chair position, and participating in a recent shared governance summit. For my efforts, I received the **2023 CASE Department Citizen Award**.

Along with working to support the needs of my department, the college, and campus, I have demonstrated creative and passionate involvement with students as faculty sponsor (2012-2024) for Sigma Tau Delta, the English Honors Society. I approached this responsibility with great dedication, attending all society meetings and actively participating in major events. I helped the club establish a Brown Bag Series, where faculty within the department and across the

humanities had a chance to present their research. The series was highly successful, providing a platform for faculty to share their work with both the campus and the broader community. I encouraged student scholarship, taking students to academic conferences across the region. In 2020, we launched a read-a-thon fundraising event, where we streamed live readings of literary texts on Twitch encouraging donations to support local and national foodbanks. This campaign raised over \$500 annually for charity, becoming our most successful fundraising initiative. Through this effort, we collaborated with campus and community partners to increase awareness of the society and ETC department. As faculty sponsor, I worked closely with students, offering personalized support that enhanced their university experience and contributed to higher success rates both academically and professionally. I also had the privilege of conducting exit interviews with two graduating Sigma Tau Delta members during my tenure as Acting Chair, taking the opportunity to celebrate their achievements as they completed their studies at Missouri S&T. A former student and Sigma Tau Delta president nominated me for, and played a key role in my receiving, the **2022 CASE Student Impact Award**. This is the level of attention and commitment I will bring to students as Department Chair.


I understand that a supportive department atmosphere is crucial for fostering a positive and productive work environment. For example, as Acting Chair I guided one faculty member through the department's promotion process and wrote the chair's letter for promotion. I successfully campaigned for two faculty to receive College-level Faculty Teaching awards. I implemented a new mentoring program for new faculty at the department level. New faculty—along with anyone else who wanted mentorship—were paired with an official mentor for regular meetings. At the end of the year, the mentors could submit a letter to be included in the mentees' annual review packet. Mentees have reported appreciating my efforts and the precision of the department's mentorship documentation. I have consistently worked to support colleagues in their academic efforts and will bring this focus to my role as Department Chair.

Looking ahead, I center my vision for ETC department on building upon its existing strengths while addressing emerging challenges in higher education. I will initiate a service audit to promote efficient service loads while fostering a culture that supports a strong work-life balance. Additionally, I will review our course offerings to ensure a robust and streamlined student experience that supports timely progress toward graduation. I will continue to engage all units—English, Technical Communication, Speech and Media Studies, and Linguistics—to strengthen the department as a coherent whole. I plan to overhaul the department website, enhancing the user experience at this critical first point of contact with our department. I will encourage—and potentially incentivize—faculty to expand opportunities for student research through FYRE and OURE projects. I will collaborate with advisors in other departments to ensure our courses are well-represented and effectively integrated into broader programs. I will also work to translate key department minors into certificates, providing students with more immediate and tangible credentials. My goal is to highlight the department's reputation for exceptional teaching and quality research, increasing our visibility and creating more opportunities for both faculty and students. Key to achieving these goals will be fostering interdisciplinary collaboration and continuing to attract and retain outstanding faculty.

I am excited to collaborate with the talented team of faculty, staff, and students in Missouri S&T's Department of English and Technical Communication to set new goals for their continued success and advancement. Being Department Chair would place me in the best position to

support and promote my outstanding colleagues. Thank you for considering my application, and I look forward to discussing in more detail how as Chair I can help guide our department's next steps into a strong, innovative future.

Sincerely,

Kathryn C. Dolan 

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