

February 14, 2018

Paul van der Veur, Ph.D., Chair
Department of Communication Studies
SUNY Cortland

Dear Chari van der Veur,

The Department of Communication Studies Personnel Committee (hereafter CSDPC) met on February 9 to review the application of Mr. Sam Avery, assistant professor, for three-year plus contract renewal. The results of a vote after a careful review are that all three members of the committee recommended his contract to be renewed. The decision was made based on the portfolio provided by Mr. Avery, using the criteria set forth by the Communication Studies Department, section 230 of the SUNY Cortland College Handbook, as well as the Board of Trustees Policies of the State University of New York.

Mr. Avery started teaching in the Department of Communication Studies in the Fall of 2013. The CSDPC cites the following evidence and data to show that Mr. Avery demonstrated considerable ability in teaching effectiveness, scholarship and creative activities, service, mastery of subject matter, and continuing professional growth.

Teaching Effectiveness

Mr. Avery has taught seven different courses in the department mostly in the area of media production. His Course Teaching Evaluations (CTEs) and student comments reflect strong student sentiment that he is an effective and enthusiastic teacher. The average scores of 15 CTE evaluation items consistently ranked high, 4.47 to 4.97 out of 5 range throughout the years he taught at the department. Comments show students have high regards for Mr. Avery, and did appreciate the skills acquired in such courses as Video Production I, II. One student wrote, "It has been the most productive and realistic to my career." Another student commented, "He really cares about students. He personally helped with planning my future." Other laudatory comments are, "Every class you become a better writer," and "Sam has so much energy and effective in teaching."

Course materials provided show that Mr. Avery's courses are well designed and carefully executed. His in-class discussions are events that all students can be participatory and engaging, some of which Mr. Avery videotaped and linked to his online portfolio.

However, the CSDPC noted that a concern raised by students in the past courses has not been addressed in the recent materials Mr. Avery has provided. For example, in COM 301 Mass Communication, a number of students raised questions about transparency and predictability of the grading systems. Students commented, "the grading system is a little too complex to figure it out," "Hard to know what your grade will be in the end," or "TA should not be grading as much as she does."

Mr. Avery's COM 342 Video Production II was observed by Prof. Paul van der Veur in Fall 2017. He concluded the class as very effective commenting, "He had a clear plan of what he wanted students to learn." COM 301 class was observed by Prof. Kathleen A. Lawrence in Fall 2014. Dr. Lawrence found Mr. Avery's ability to interact to be "most impressive." COM 322 Media Writing was observed by Prof. Sam L. Kelley in Fall 2014, who state the class as successful and informational.

Scholarship and Creative Activities

Regarding scholarship and creative activities, Mr. Avery has been engaged in ambitious and productive activities since arriving here. Overall, he provided us with links to 20 select films he has written, directed, and edited. Among these films, nine films were produced by Mr. Avery. While this record itself is creditable, the CSDPC recommends Mr. Avery to present his record in a more organized way so that the records can be substantiated. For example, films produced for institutional promotions should be distinguished from films accepted at peer reviewed festivals. Also, created films will be better qualified if the listed film festivals are accompanied by proofs of acceptance such as emails or programs. We recommend that Mr. Avery include letters from other contributors of films acknowledging his specific contribution, identified as a percentage of input to the film.

Added to his film work, Mr. Avery published a book chapter last year, "Not without Us: Collaborating across Difference in Documentary Filmmaking." Documentary and Disability.

Service

The committee considers Mr. Avery's service record as highly commendable, as he provided documentation to demonstrate strong commitment to services at the department, university and community level.

The Blackbird Film Festival, an international film and video festival that Mr. Avery created in April 2016 has grown to an event that attracts over 120 films around the world. The committee notes that the festival benefits students, the college as well as the community that surrounds the institution. As a student run festival, Blackbird offers students unique opportunities to get a field experience to produce, coordinate, and judge in high level film competition. Also in 2017, the Cortland County Convention and Visitor Bureau (CCCBV) has become involved in the festival to incorporate more of downtown Cortland.

At the departmental level, Mr. Avery is actively engaged in all functional committees. He served as chairs to Department Curriculum Development Committee and Search Committee, often chairing the two committees at the same time. He has a good record of university service, such as producing promotional videos for the SUNY and CUNY system. He was trained and is scheduled to be a Faculty Justice.

Continued Growth

Regarding continued growth, Mr. Avery strengthened his professional network with a variety of filmmakers and festival organizers. He recruited films and filmmakers for the 2018 Blackbird Film Festival with financial assistance. He also took media production students for trips to various film festivals in the surrounding area.

Conclusion

The CSDPC has concluded that Mr. Avery fully deserves the opportunity to continue to contribute to the department and the institution. Mr. Avery proved himself to be an effective teacher and an outstanding creative producer whose contribution has been very much appreciated by students and colleagues. As we look to the future, the committee recommends he extends his contribution to the discipline, by participating in such conferences like University Film and Video Association Conference. The full vote of the committee follows.

Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact the committee.

Sincerely,

Caroline Kaltefleiter, Ph.D.  Co-Chair, CSDPC

Kathleen A. Lawrence, Ph.D.  Co-Chair, CSDPC

Sung Woo, Ph.D.  Member, CSDPC

Vote for contract renewal:

1 very highly recommend

1 highly recommend

1 recommend

not recommend

cc: Samuel Avery
Caroline Kaltefleiter
Kathleen Lawrence
Sung Woo Yoo

February 21, 2018

Fine Arts and Humanities Subdivision Personnel Committee
School of Arts and Sciences
SUNY Cortland

Dear Subdivision Personnel Committee Members,

I have reviewed the materials submitted by Sam Avery and am pleased to recommend his reappointment in the Communication Studies Department. This recommendation is based on the State University of New York Board of Trustees Policies and Procedures criteria of Mastery of Subject Matter, Effectiveness in Teaching, Scholarly Ability, College Service, and Continuing Growth. This positive recommendation is consistent with that of the Department Personnel Committee. The Committee's options were to very highly recommend (1), highly recommend (1), recommend (1), and not recommend (0).

Mastery of Subject Matter/Continuing Growth

Mr. Avery completed his Master of Fine Arts in Media Arts Production at the State University of New York University at Buffalo in 2013. Avery's creative works earned recognition at festivals and competitions in 2007, 2012, 2014, 2017, and most recently in 2018. In addition, Avery works to improve his skills through participation in events such as the Tribeca Talks Industry Master Classes (2014) and annual attendance at the regional Society of Broadcast Engineers Expo.

Effectiveness in Teaching

Since entering the Communication Studies Department, Mr. Avery has taught seven courses, including: COM 243 Video Production I, COM 301 Mass Media and Society, COM 322 Intermediate Writing for Media, COM 342 Video Production II, and COM 349 Multimedia Production. Effective teaching in each of these courses is essential to the delivery of our Communication Studies and New Communication Media programs. Mass Media and Society is a core course in Communication Studies and fulfills a General Education 03 requirement. Intermediate Writing for Media is required of our Media Production majors and carries the Writing Intensive attribute. Video Production I & II and Multimedia Production are central both to the Media Production concentration and the major in New Communication Media.

Sam Avery has performed exceptionally well in his teaching. In their evaluations, students rank Avery highly across all measures. Observations made in three classroom visitations by faculty peers corroborate student opinions. By all accounts, Avery does an exceptional job establishing rapport with students, engaging his students and making content accessible to them.

Scholarly Ability

Samuel Avery's scholarship is creative in nature and focuses on the development of film and video projects. In recent years he has worked as producer, director, videographer, and editor. In the period under review, this work was supplemented by the publication of a book chapter. Also,

of significance is Avery's creation of an international film festival held annually on the Cortland campus.

In describing his documentary/non-fiction filmmaking, Avery notes the centrality of storytelling to his work. This focus on the story is evident in many of the choices Avery makes when directing, filming, or editing. A review of his work reveals a good 'eye' for visuals and a strong sense of composition. Avery's editing demonstrates a well-developed sense of timing and motivation. An increasing level of technical skill and sophistication are also evident when viewing the body of work presented.

Avery's portfolio included links to 20 films including juried creative works, commissioned pieces, and promotional videos. A number of these works have received regional, national, and international recognition. It should be noted that Avery actively engages students in the creative process and thus provides students with significant supplemental instruction and hands-on learning opportunities. In addition, his promotional pieces provide service to the college while again enhancing student learning opportunities.

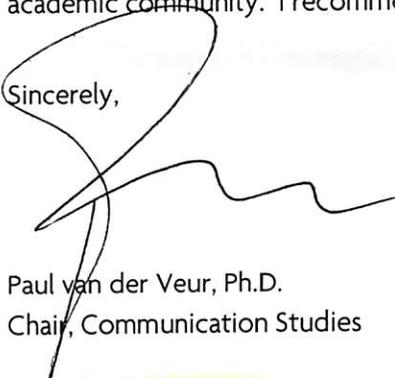
College Service

Since arriving at Cortland, Mr. Avery has provided an exception level of service to the department, the college, the community and the discipline. At the department level, Avery has consistently served on Curriculum, Personnel, and Search Committees. As noted above, he lent his expertise to enhance the college and the SUNY System through the creation of promotional videos. This service also extended to participating in an external program review for one of our sister institutions.

The most visible example of Mr. Avery's service is the creation of the Blackbird Film Festival. Avery introduced the festival in 2016 and has managed its growth since that time. As noted in his summary of accomplishments, this festival serves the discipline, the community, the college, the department, and most significantly, the students.

In conclusion, I find that Mr. Avery has demonstrated himself to be a valuable member of this academic community. I recommend his reappointment.

Sincerely,



Paul van der Veur, Ph.D.
Chair, Communication Studies

cc **Samuel Avery**
Caroline Kaltefleiter, Department Personnel Committee Co-Chair
Kathleen Lawrence, Department Personnel Committee Co-Chair
file

To: Dr. Bruce Mattingly, Dean, Arts and Sciences
From: Dr. E. Kim Stone, Chair, Fine Arts and Humanities Sub-School Personnel Committee 
Date: March 30, 2018
Re: Reappointment recommendation for Samuel Avery, Assistant Professor, Communication Studies

The Fine Arts and Humanities Sub-School Personnel Committee is pleased to recommend Samuel Avery of the Communication Studies Department for a two-year reappointment.

Since his last review in 2016, Professor Avery has distinguished himself as a creative film and video producer and a scholar of documentary filmmaking. Professor Avery has directed four new short films, and two of them, *The Marksman* (2017) and *Glimpse* (2016), have been garnering accolades at local, national, and international film festivals. The committee particularly commends Professor Avery for the multiple awards that *The Marksman* has received. In addition, Professor Avery has co-produced five new short works for an ongoing series on inclusive education practices. And, Professor Avery's recent scholarship includes a book chapter on collaboration in documentary filmmaking. These achievements suggest that he is beginning to have an impact on the field of documentary filmmaking.

Professor Avery continues to develop as a highly effective and engaging teacher. In addition to proactively rethinking his teaching methodology for his production courses, as reflected in his Teaching Philosophy, Professor Avery has also consistently received strong positive reactions from both colleagues and students. In a recent classroom observation, a colleague praised Avery for the "significant support and guidance," he gave his video production students, and concluded that his teaching was "very effective." Professor Avery has consistently sustained excellent CTE scores for his classes, and students remark again and again on how well they are being prepared for work in the field of media production.

In the area of service, the committee commends Professor Avery for his exemplary contributions in the past few years. The Blackbird Film Festival, an online film and video festival that Professor Avery founded and continues to direct, has grown tremendously into a well-respected event. It is particularly notable that students who work on the festival receive significant experience in all phases of production. The ABC/Disney Quantico Internship Program that he established in 2016 and the advising work he does for the Cortland State Television student organization demonstrate that Professor Avery is dedicated to providing students with "real world" experiences in the field of TV production. And he has recently strengthened his commitment to department service by serving as Chair of the Curriculum Committee and several Search Committees.

Professor Avery's well regarded creative endeavors, commitment to excellence in teaching, and multiple service accomplishments suggest that he is a valuable asset to both SUNY Cortland and the field of communication. The Fine Arts and Humanities Sub-School Personnel Committee strongly supports Samuel Avery's two-year reappointment.

The committee vote was as follows:

 4 Very Highly Recommend

 Highly Recommend

 1 Recommend

 Not Recommend

 Abstain

CC: Paul van der Veur, Chair, Communication Studies
Caroline Kalterfleiter, Co-Chair, Department Personnel Committee
Kathleen A. Lawrence, Co-Chair, Department Personnel Committee
Samuel Avery

MEMORANDUM

TO: Mark Prus, Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs

FROM: R. Bruce Mattingly, Dean of Arts and Sciences

DATE: April 13, 2018

RE: **Reappointment Recommendation for Samuel Avery**

I am pleased to recommend Samuel Avery for a one-year reappointment. This recommendation is consistent with those of the department personnel committee, the department chair and the subschool personnel committee.

Professor Avery has taught seven different courses at SUNY Cortland focused on video and multimedia production, media writing, and special topics courses on documentary films and the popular television show Game of Thrones. His courses include a blend of theory and practical training, and the evidence indicates that his teaching methods have been successful. His CTE results in all of his courses are very strong, including numerical averages that are frequently in the mid-to-high 4's. Written comments from students are overwhelmingly positive, with many students describing him as their favorite teacher. There have been a few concerns expressed in some of his classes from students who have found his grading system to be confusing. His portfolio includes three teaching observation reports, including two from 2014 that were included in prior reviews. The department chair, Dr. Paul van der Veur, provided a new report from fall 2017 where he noted that Professor Avery was well prepared and used pedagogies appropriate to the course content.

Most of Professor Avery's scholarly and creative work is in the form of films that he has either written, directed or edited. His online portfolio includes links to 18 films, all completed since 2009, and 2 others that are in progress. His 2017 work, "The Marksman" received three awards at various festivals. Several of his prior works have also received recognition as "official selections" in a number of film festivals across the country. Some of his documentaries have been presented at academic conferences as well. His record also includes a book chapter published in an edited volume last year.

Professor Avery has engaged in a wide range of service activities, far exceeding the norm for most junior faculty members. At the department level, he served on several search committees, chairing two of them, and resulting in the hiring of five new colleagues. He has also chaired the department curriculum committee. He has helped to set up internship opportunities for students, including a high profile internship partnership with ABC/Disney. In the past, he created videos promoting student research opportunities in SUNY and CUNY and more recently created a promotional video for our International Programs Office. This semester he will begin serving as a student conduct justice. Beyond campus, he was an external reviewer for the media/telecommunications program at Cayuga Community College. By far, his most significant service has been his work in creating the Blackbird Film Festival, now in its third year. This highly regarded event attracts filmmakers from all over the world and is ranked 29th out of 100

for the Best Reviewed Film Festivals. It also supports our teaching mission, providing many students with meaningful internship and applied learning opportunities. In conclusion, Professor Avery has demonstrated a high degree of effectiveness in all areas of faculty responsibility. He is very deserving of reappointment, and I look forward to his continued contributions.

Cc: Samuel Avery, Communications Studies Department
Caroline Kaltefleiter, Co-Chair, Communication Studies Department Personnel
Committee
Kathleen Lawrence, Co-Chair, Communication Studies Department Personnel
Committee
Paul van der Veur, Chair, Communication Studies Department
Elizabeth (Kim) Stone, Chair, Fine Arts and Humanities Sub-School Personnel
Committee

May 1, 2018

TO: Erik J. Bitterbaum, President
 FROM: Mark J. Prus, Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs
 RE: Dr. Samuel Avery, Assistant Professor
 Communication Studies Department



I have reviewed the materials submitted on Dr. Samuel Avery and am pleased to recommend him for a one year reappointment in the Communication Studies Department effective September 1, 2019 through August, 31, 2020. This recommendation is consistent with those of the department personnel committee, the department chair, the school personnel committee, and the dean.

Dr. Avery's record of teaching, service and scholarship warrants reappointment. In the area of teaching, Dr. Avery has offered a variety of courses related to new communication media including video and multimedia production. Numeric scores on his CTEs are consistently in the mid to high fours and students' written comments are similarly positive. A recent peer observation report notes his preparation and content knowledge.

Dr. Avery's performance in the area of scholarship more than meets the expectations for reappointment. His creative activity includes nearly 20 films that he has written, directed and produced. Many of these films have been included in juried festivals and have been recognized with awards. He has also published a book chapter and presented at national conferences.

Dr. Avery has established a strong record of service to the Department, the College and the community. He has organized the Blackbird Film Festival that not only show cases talented filmmakers, but provides applied learning opportunities for our students. He chairs the department curriculum committee and will serve as a student conduct justice.

Dr. Avery has contributed to the Department and the College and is deserving of reappointment. I look forward to his continued contributions in teaching, scholarship and service.

* * * * *

	<u>Renewal</u>	<u>Non-renewal</u>	<u>Cont. Apt.</u>
Department Personnel Committee	X		
Department Chair	X		
School Personnel Committee	X		
School Dean	X		

NOTE: Your file in the above matter has been transferred to the President's Office for the President's review. In accordance with the UUP Agreement, Article 31.6, you have the right to examine the file during normal business hours and to respond to any item contained therein. If you wish to examine the file, please promptly call that office for an appointment.

May 15, 2018

Dr. Samuel Avery
Communication Studies
Van Hoesen Hall

Dear Dr. ^{SA}Avery:

I am pleased to offer you reappointment to the faculty staff at SUNY Cortland as Assistant Professor in the Communication Studies Department effective September 1, 2019, such appointment to cease August 31, 2020. This is a term appointment subject to the laws of this State and the Policies of the Board of Trustees. Please note that Article XI, Titles D and Article XIV, Title B of these Policies are particularly applicable to this appointment.

In accordance with the Policies of the Board of Trustees of State University of New York, a term appointment does not obligate the staff member to serve beyond the termination date, nor does it obligate the College to employ a staff member beyond the termination date regardless of work or quality of performance.

If you wish to accept this offer, please sign the endorsement on the enclosed copy of this letter and return to me. This offer shall be considered withdrawn if I do not receive your acceptance on or before May 29, 2018.

Sincerely,

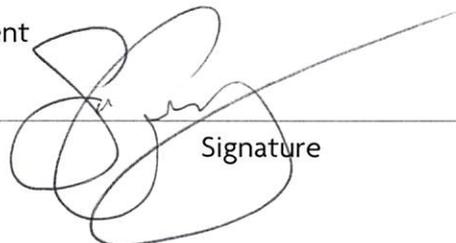


Erik J. Bitterbaum
President

I hereby accept the foregoing offer of appointment

5/25/2018

Date



Signature

Pc: M. Prus
B. Mattingly
C. Kaltefleiter
K. Lawrence
P. van der Veur
E. Stone
F. Pierce
T. Rammacher
S. VanLiew