

January 28, 2019

Cape Breton University Awards Committee

**Re: Dr. Patrick Howard's Nomination for the President's Award for Excellence in Research**

To Whom It May Concern,

It is with pleasure that I submit this letter in support of the nomination of Dr. Patrick Howard for the President's Award for Excellence in Research. I have reviewed the criteria of the award and have had the privilege of working closely with Patrick over a number of years, both as a faculty colleague and as his Dean. I think this provides me with a unique vantage point from which to comment on his work. Patrick is an exemplary researcher and excels in all areas outlined as parameters for the award. Beyond that, his role as an academic leader at CBU, in research and other areas, is outstanding. Patrick's work at CBU is truly worthy of recognition.

Patrick's commitment to research excellence and productivity has been apparent from the beginning of his employment at CBU in 2009. At his time of hire, he was part a faculty team establishing the new Bachelor of Education program. Despite the heavy course load associated with development and implementation of the new program, Patrick lost no time in establishing a robust research agenda. This pattern, of balancing heavy administrative and teaching responsibilities with high research output, is one that has continued for him, throughout the entirety of his faculty work at CBU.

With respect to the primary criteria as outlined for the Research Excellence award; *i. (External, peer-reviewed scholarly activity)*, Patrick's track record is outstanding. He has multiple peer reviewed publications (journal articles, peer-reviewed conference proceedings and book chapters) during each and all of his years as a CBU Faculty member. He has presented regularly at conferences both within Canada and internationally. He has been the recipient of two major SSHRC grants and as well has received multiple research awards internally from CBU and externally, from the Cape Breton Health Research Fund. Currently, Patrick is engaged in writing a text book, with Department of Education colleague, Dr. Catherine O'Brien.

*ii. Productivity* is noted as the second criteria for the award. Beyond the significant "output" of peer-reviewed work already mentioned, another very tangible example of Patrick's productivity as a researcher and scholar was his leadership in the development of the successful proposal for the Masters Degree in Education (Sustainability, Creativity and Innovation). Dr. Howard's research and expertise in the area of

Education for Sustainability was foundational in the development of this degree and as well, to the adoption of Education for Sustainability principles as underpinning for all teacher education programs offered by CBU.

*iii. Creativity* Anyone who has worked closely with Patrick on any project or activity will attest to his out-of-the-box enthusiasm around new and innovative approaches in education. His work on the Masters degree (the first of its kind in Canada) speaks to this philosophy. His leadership was essential to the non-traditional, In-community delivery of CBU's Bachelor of Education in Indian Brook (2014-2016). Patrick has demonstrated interest in exploring linkages between technology and creativity and innovation in education. He recently completed a SSHRC funded program, which examined linkages around creativity, art-making and teacher and student experiences in a digital world. Patrick has been the social media lead for the Education Department, responsible for maintaining the Department FaceBook- page as well as its messaging through other social media streams. Patrick has been at the forefront of the Department's efforts in establishing and maintaining a digital profile.

The *iv. Influence and Impact* of Patrick's research and scholarly work on others is substantive both within CBU and externally. His expertise in areas related to Education for Sustainability is nationally recognized and he is frequently invited (as demonstrated by his CV) to review book chapters and manuscripts in this field as well as others. That CBU's Education Department has seen fit to officially adopt and embed principles of ESD within all its teacher education program speaks to Patrick's expertise and influence.

The last criteria defined by the award application is *v. Recognition*. Again, Patrick's CV speaks directly to a host of professional and scholarly activities (too many to expand upon in detail in a letter) in alignment. He has served as an invited adjudicator for a Canadian Thesis award, has been an invited peer reviewer for chapters, articles and research-grant submissions and has he led numerous educational sessions for colleagues (on numerous topics) within CB . In 2013, Patrick was an invited member of the International Advisory Board for the international Conference of Education, Research and Innovation in Seville, Spain, and in 2017-2018, he completed a Sabbatical year, which enabled him to further advance his work.

The breadth and depth of Patrick's research contributions at CBU is too substantive to adequately capture its essence and excellence in a single letter of support. However, I would like to close, by commenting on three things, which in my opinion, make Patrick's contributions "stand out from others" and particularly worthy of recognition by Cape Breton University.

- (1.) The quality and quantity of Patrick's research productivity has remained consistently high while he has also carried significant teaching and administrative responsibilities. (Patrick is a past Chair of the Department).
- (2.) His work is not narrowly focused and he has seriously established research thrusts across a number of areas ( literacy and assessment, education for sustainability and various aspects of technology as a transformative educational supporting modern pedagogies). This is especially beneficial to a small University and Department as is the case at CBU,  
and
- (3.) Patrick's generosity of spirit, demonstrated throughout other areas of his work, carries over into his research. He is genuinely interested in seeking research opportunities that serve the greater

good, and is quick to find ways to use the word “we” and engage others in his research activities and success. Patrick shares his research expertise with others on a regular basis and provides ongoing mentorship to less-experienced faculty researchers.

I cannot imagine any researcher at CBU more deserving of the President’s Award for Excellence in Research than Patrick Howard. I encourage the Awards committee to review his nomination with diligence.

Yours Sincerely,

Jane Lewis, PhD  
Associate Professor, Education