

March 10, 2017

Dear Promotion Committee:

I am writing this letter in full support of promotion for Jessica Barkl.

It is my firm belief that DC Comics based their character of Wonder Woman on our real-life, Jessica Barkl. Just by looking at the abilities listed for Wonder Woman: "Superhuman strength, speed, stamina, durability, reflexes, agility, animal empathy, longevity, superhumanly acute senses,"¹ as well as being a master at hand-to-hand combat, you can see a definite correlation.

To give a little background, I was on vacation when the interviews for Jessica's current position were being held so I was not able to meet her before her beforehand. When I returned I was told Jessica had been hired and that she would be here in time for the faculty/staff development day.

As is customary, I reach out to new hires to welcome them to the division and to help them maneuver their way through our systems. Since I had not had any personal contact with Jessica yet, I wanted to learn a little about her so I took a look at her resume. This led me to her website: www.jessicabarkltheaterartist.com/. At the very top of that page it reads: "Find me on Facebook." I have to say, those wonderful words were the start of a beautiful relationship. As I scrolled through Jessica's FB page to find out a little bit about her I was awed. At the time Jessica was working in New Mexico. She was a few weeks away from starting at SUNY Sullivan and she was already reaching out to her connections to find out about the theater life in Sullivan County (agility). She had already rented a tiny house in my-neck-of-the woods and would be bringing her two furry friends, Gus and Lapdog, a rescue (animal empathy). I immediately made contact with Jessica and promised that I was NOT stalking her but that I knew she was inquiring about theater life in the area. I gave her some general contact information on what I knew about theater life in Sullivan County and some vet info for the pooches.

From the time Jessica started I knew she was going to be amazing. Here was an instructor who wanted to let her actors choose the plays they wanted to perform and at the very on-set she was thrown a curve-ball (reflexes). After the students had selected their two plays she was told that Administration wanted one of the plays to be a musical (and they had not selected one). Rather than telling the students they couldn't present the plays they had already selected, she added the musical in repertoire adding another production to her workload. Not only was she starting a new theater program from nothing, she had to deal with numerous cast changes as students dropped out of the productions. She was constantly having to re-cast and start over. Her stamina was nothing short of amazing.

¹ Wikipedia Contributors. "Wonder Woman." *Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia*. Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopeda, 24 Feb. 2017. Web. 24 Feb. 2017.
<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wonder_Woman

Whatever the hurdle, curve-ball, or disaster of the month that happens, and there are many - she is there, solving the problem and making things move forward seamlessly. The hours she puts in above and beyond her teaching load (karaoke events, performing arts club) and the time she commits to community involvement (stiltling group, NACL productions, Bethel Woods) is immeasurable. She is committed to the college's commitment to sustainability and incorporates that into her productions.

In the first seven years I worked here I went into the Seelig theater only for Administrative meetings. Jessica has changed that. The theater is active and alive because of her. I'm always struck by the amazing sets and her ability to do so much with so little.

Jessica has a work ethic that is second-to-none. She is driven, and committed. She expects the best from her students and she has earned their respect and admiration. She is most deserving of promotion.

As a side note, I came across the enclosed photo and couldn't get over the remarkable resemblance to Jessica. I thought I should include it as proof.

Thank you for your consideration.

Cordially,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Alicia Lanese". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Alicia Lanese

