



English Department

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Dr. Julie Christensen
Chair, Modern and Classical Languages
Search Committee
Director, Cultural Studies Program

Dear Dr. Christensen and members of the Search Committee:

I am writing to express my interest in being considered for the Director of Cultural Studies, a position scheduled to begin Fall 2014. As many of you know, George Mason's Cultural Studies doctoral program was the first of its kind in the United States, and I have been an integral member from its initial inception, as course designer, instructor, frequent member of the Executive and Admissions Committees, and field and dissertation director.

I know the program deeply and well; I have been and will continue to be committed to maintaining its already-considerable success as a doctoral program, even as I would seek to develop interdisciplinary connections at the graduate and undergraduate levels with such CHHS departments as English (particularly Film and Media Studies), History and New Media, and Global Affairs. Cultural Studies has much to offer the college: as a transdisciplinary field that strongly emphasizes textual skills and historical thinking, that trains students to think in terms of large-scale problems (indeed, global ones) and modes of analysis, and that understands the role of media both old and new in the formation of critical and practical discourse, Cultural Studies is already at the cutting edge of topical scholarship and pedagogy—and that is where many of the college's strengths increasingly lie.

It is also where I locate my own strengths as a scholar. In fact, my research has always been firmly interdisciplinary: even as GMU inaugurated the cultural studies program, my first book *New Science, New World* forged innovative connections among early modern colonialism, natural philosophy, and literature, drawing from critical models as disparate as Michel Foucault, Michel Serres, and Paul Feyerabend. On its strength, I was invited to serve as a Visiting Associate Professor for a semester at John Hopkins University. Moreover, as my involvement with Cultural Studies has deepened, its effect on my critical work has made itself felt ever more greatly. Certainly most of my recent publications on Shakespeare, the canon, the politics of literacy, and the role of media in national discourse on the Bard have been entirely congruent with cultural studies. In fact, at my promotion to Professor in 2010-11, external reviewers noted that that scholarship—including *Extramural Shakespeare*, a monograph on Shakespeare in peri-millennial US culture—had been highly influential in defining the intersection between early modern literary and cultural studies.

Surely any potential director should meet almost all these criteria, or ones comparable to them: Cultural Studies will continue to succeed as a program when it is led by someone deeply vested, and invested, in its distinctive history, practice, and modes of inquiry, while also remaining open to new possibilities and directions. However, I hope to bring still more to the job by virtue of my past service in English, undertaken even as I also gave my time to Cultural Studies: namely, strong and varied administrative skills and experience, most of which has demanded a high

degree of collaboration. As my *curriculum vitae* attests, I have contributed a great deal to my home department, the college, and the university, especially for someone with an active and well-received research agenda.

Perhaps most pertinent, I served as Director of Graduate Study in English for five years. During that period, I inaugurated the process of assessing our graduate programs; supervised curricular and catalog changes for our four M.A. tracks; advised students; ran the admissions process; consulted on TA and RA budgets both inside and outside the department; and served ex officio on the Chair's Advisory Committee. I was also responsible for recruitment, and I'm proud to note that enrollments rose 20-25% during my time in the position. Among my myriad other responsibilities, I've also served as summer chair for the department; represented English on the College Promotion and Tenure Committee at the same time I was the department's chair for Reappointments, Promotion, and Tenure; conducted faculty performance evaluations as a member of the department's Salary Committee; and chaired several national searches.

As I hope my record suggests, I have taken service as seriously as I do scholarship. It is perhaps not untoward to say that my evident dedication to both puts me in a strong position to serve as potential director of a doctoral program.

Let me close by once more by expressing my great interest in being considered for the position of director. I look forward to hearing from the search committee soon.

Sincerely,

Denise Albanese (electronic signature)

Denise Albanese
Professor
English and Cultural Studies