

January 15, 2024

Crane School of Music Personnel Committee, SUNY Potsdam Administration
State University of New York at Potsdam
44 Pierrepoint Avenue
Potsdam, NY 13676

Dear reviewers,

I am writing in strongest support of Dr. Brianne Borden's reappointment as Assistant Professor at the Crane School of Music. Having served with Dr. Borden for the past four years on several university committees and worked with her on multiple projects, I can testify that she is a thoughtful and engaged teacher, an invaluable collaborator, and an excellent colleague. Dr. Borden's focus on wellness—which informs her scholarly output, her teaching methods and courses, and her service work—plays a particularly important role in our work to revise our music curriculum and intensify our commitment to diversity, inclusion, and wellness. As we move forward with these initiatives, Dr. Borden will be at the center of these discussions, and we're very lucky to have her here at Crane.

Some of my own research in music history focuses on music and trauma/trauma-informed pedagogy, and I am a founding co-chair of a study group within the national American Musicological Society on "Music, Sound, and Trauma." At the AMS national meeting in New Orleans in November 2022, I co-organized a professional development session on "Trauma-Informed Pedagogies for Music History Educators" and invited Dr. Borden to give a presentation on her work as part of this workshop. During her presentation in New Orleans, Dr. Borden demonstrated a variety of trauma-informed techniques—ranging from wellness initiatives and coursework to grounding techniques to practices within a trumpet studio—drawing on experiences from Crane as well as her role as CEO of Yoga for All Musicians. Her presentation and perspective offered a really innovative experience at a music history conference, and helped showcase an interdisciplinary means of collaborating on wellness and trauma-informed pedagogy. The talk was very well-received, and I look forward to many more years of getting to collaborate with Dr. Borden on similar subjects. As her CV notes, she is much in demand on these subjects, and has given many workshops, presentations, and other public work on musicians' wellness. In sum, her scholarly knowledge in these areas is a great asset to Crane and SUNY Potsdam.

As a studio teacher, Dr. Borden maintains a large trumpet studio and created an extremely popular and valuable elective course on "Musicians' Wellness." As just a couple of comments on her teaching, via what I have personally observed: the rapport and community within the trumpet studio seems excellent, demonstrating a collaborative and constructive environment where students can support each other. Dr. Borden recently published a book on *Mindful Trumpet Playing: A Guide to Managing Performance Anxiety*; her insights into performance anxiety and techniques for managing it are not only hugely impactful to her studio but also encourage all of Crane's students to have more public conversations on these topics. Her attentiveness to care

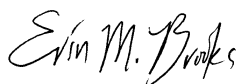
and wellness in playing, practicing, and musicking extend beyond her studio in other ways as well; several years ago she created a set of posters for practice rooms which highlighted grounding techniques and mindfulness strategies to use in case of practice room anxiety and stress. I'm grateful for all the amazing work Dr. Borden does in advocating for healthier ways of teaching and practicing without harm.

Finally, Dr. Borden's CV testifies to leadership roles she has taken on important committees as a pre-tenure faculty member; I'd like to speak in particular about her service at Crane. Drawing on her areas of expertise, Dr. Borden spent several years advocating for an official Crane School of Music wellness committee. With the enthusiastic support of Dean Gibbons, the Crane Wellness Committee commenced as an ad-hoc group in fall 2023. Dr. Borden convened interested faculty from multiple parts of the school as well as student representation, and the group has had a productive slate of meetings this fall. I've been excited to be part of this group, and we've already revised wellness day, discussed curricular and policy issues, and solicited input from students and faculty on wellness-related topics. I'm excited to see what we accomplish with this committee in the future, I'm delighted to continue working with Dr. Borden on this, and I hope that this committee becomes a permanent part of Crane's infrastructure.

In addition to Dr. Borden's work in teaching, scholarship, and service, I would also like to note her active and impressive performance activities. As a member of the Potsdam Brass Quintet, Dr. Borden collaborates with Crane brass colleagues to give concerts, workshops, and master classes throughout New York each year. PBQ is one of Crane's most esteemed chamber ensembles, not only in terms of longevity and reputation but also through invaluable educational and recruiting initiatives (they directly recruit many of our undergraduate brass players). We both play in the Orchestra of Northern New York, and I've likewise very much appreciated Dr. Borden's work as principal trumpet in that ensemble. Finally, Dr. Borden gives several faculty solo and chamber recitals each year at Crane; in addition to her performances themselves, I commend her thoughtful attention to programming. She is always attentive to diversity and inclusion, making sure that each program includes music by underrepresented composers and genres. It is so important for our students to see this consistently modeled by studio faculty, and Dr. Borden is an excellent example for her students in this regard.

In sum, Dr. Borden is an absolute pleasure to have as a colleague, and invaluable to the school in many ways, from scholarship to teaching to service. Her work reflects the requirements (and beyond) of an Assistant Professor and I recommend her reappointment with no reservations.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Erin M. Brooks". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Dr. Erin Brooks
Associate Professor of Music History,
Crane School of Music, SUNY Potsdam