

Appalachian

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To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing to recommend Lisa Baldwin for a teaching position and for appropriate positions in the arts. I have known Lisa for almost a decade and have witnessed her skills and talents as a teacher, musician, community and event organizer, music outreach worker, graduate student, and collaborator on several projects. Lisa is remarkably versatile and I take pleasure in recommending her for a variety of positions.

Lisa was an award winning teacher in the North Carolina public schools (Wilkes, Watauga and Ashe counties), most notably Teacher of the Year in 2005 and Who's Who Among America's Teachers for 2006. As I became familiar with her great talents as an educator, song writer and performer, as well as her interests in regional music and folklore, I recruited her for the MA degree program in Appalachian Studies, which she began in 2007. I later saw her effectively translate her expertise in content and pedagogy with teachers from across the United States as Master Teacher for the National Endowment for the Humanities K-12 Teacher Institute: "Not Just a Scenic Road: The Blue Ridge Parkway and its History."

Fall semester of 2008 Lisa was a participant in my anthropology graduate seminar, Appalachian Culture. This unique course is part of an Appalachian Regional Commission funded Collaborative Teaching Project (ARCTP), involving a dozen colleges, universities, and community colleges in Appalachia. In addition to analysis of ethnographic texts, the class collaborated with the local Riverview Community Center in projects designed to strengthen the community. Lisa led her peers in researching and organizing the Riverview Music festival. Lisa again led her fellow graduate students in an outstanding presentation of the results of their work in Washington, DC to the ARC staff and about 150 faculty and students from the Appalachians— from Pennsylvania to Mississippi. Through her work in the class, Lisa again demonstrated her skills as an organizer and speaker, capable of critical research, a leader among her peers. As a graduate student she co-edited an interview "Waaaaay Back Up in the Mountains": An Interview with Storyteller Orville Hicks, published in *Appalachian Journal* 2010, and wrote a review of "Rank Strangers: The Music of Mrs. Hyatt's Oprohause", published in the *North Carolina Folklore Journal* (2009).

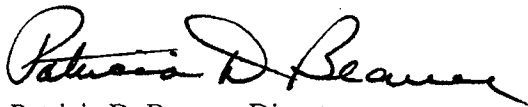
Lisa and I worked on a small but very competitive grant proposal for supporting food localization. Though we not successful, I was impressed with Lisa's purposefulness in her writing, advocacy, and organizing of people and ideas. She also served as volunteer for both the Watauga and Ashe County Arts Councils, in addition to the Riverview Community Center. Through her music program Learning through Song and her other volunteer activities, she brought music to children and adults alike at the public library, the Children's Playhouse, and the two county arts councils. Many children and adults in our community have been grateful for Lisa's generosity in sharing her talents with her community, and her insights on the importance of the arts for learning and for community building.

Lisa served as a valued graduate assistant for Appalachian Music instructor Mark Freed. We were very excited to offer Lisa a section of our important sophomore level general education course, AS 2410 Appalachian Studies: An Introduction, through which we attract students to the field and into the major, Lisa's course evaluations were overwhelmingly enthusiastic about the content of her course and her teaching methods, including comments such as "awesome class", "wonderful teacher", "knowledgeable, flexible and understanding but maintains her expectations", "helpful, honest, fair", "I love Lisa, great person, great teacher". One student concluded "I was reminded that different does not mean bad; it helped me to learn not to judge what I don't understand." We would, of course, have given Lisa additional courses had she stayed in our area.

Lisa has completed all requirements for the Master of Arts degree in Appalachian Studies except the foreign language requirement which is in progress. Her MA thesis "Jack, Alive and Well on Beech Mountain in Western North Carolina: The Cultural Traditions of Ted Hicks," is a close, careful, sensitive treatment and important contribution to the literature and documentation on the Hicks/Harmon storytellers of northwestern North Carolina, public and private performance, the genre of "Jack tales," and the nature of oral kin based transmission.

I take pleasure in recommending Lisa for teaching positions or other leadership positions in the arts. Please do not hesitate to call or email for additional information.

Sincerely,



Patricia D. Beaver, Director
Professor of Anthropology