IUPUI
Department of Psychology
SCHOOL OF SCIENCE
A Purdue University School
Indianapolis

January 14, 2011

To Members of the Selection Committee:

I am so pleased to offer my most enthusiastic nomination for Dr. Leslie Ashburn-Nardo, Associate Professor in the Department of Psychology, to receive the 2011 Alvin S. Bynum Mentor Award. Dr. Ashburn-Nardo joined our department in 2003 after receiving her Ph.D. in Social Psychology from the University of Kentucky. As soon as her lab was established, Leslie immediately began attracting undergraduate and graduate students to work with her on her research related to prejudice and implicit biases related to race and gender. She has been a particularly effective mentor of students from underrepresented groups, who I believe are drawn to her first because of her research area and her approachability. All of her mentees stay involved with her because of her uncanny knack of meeting students where they are – and then pushing them ever so effectively to reach beyond that point to attain goals and dreams that she helps them to shape. She is an utterly supportive, yet transforming mentor – and she does this with large numbers of students each semester. Her laboratory is literally buzzing with enthusiastic mentees that help to conceptualize research projects, collect data, and interpret and disseminate results. She also is a wonderful role model to graduate students and to more junior faculty, and letters from current and former students attest to the impact that she has had on their lives.

In her 6 years at IUPUI, Dr. Ashburn-Nardo has been nominated by nearly 100 graduating School of Science students as having had a remarkably positive impact on their lives – indeed, 11 of these students report that Dr. Ashburn-Nardo has influenced the whole course of their life. She has regularly supervised 10-12 undergraduate students in her laboratory each semester. This mentoring extends beyond the laboratory, into her office (where the door is always open), and into her home, where she routinely invites students for informal gatherings each semester. Her students routinely present posters or make presentations based on their research at professional conferences and several have been coauthors on publications. What you may not be able to discern from her letters is the track record that Leslie has had in terms of inspiring students to earn PhDs in social psychology. Her students have been remarkably successful – not only in gaining admission to graduate programs, but in terms of being offered *full fellowships* at some of the *best* Social Psychology programs in the country – including Ohio State University and the University of Washington. Leslie inspires her students to pursue issues related to social justice through rigorous theoretical and methodological practices – they are a credit to our department as they continue on in their graduate training. More recently Dr. Ashburn-Nardo has taken a leadership role on a project related to advancing the careers of women in STEM disciplines (funded through the Office of Diversity Equity, and Inclusion). Not surprisingly, Leslie has recruited a strong team of graduate and undergraduate students to assist her with this project, and we look

LD 124 402 N. Blackford Street Indianapolis, IN 46202-3275 (317) 274-4930 fax (317) 274-6756

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forward to the results and the impact that they hopefully will have on the mentoring of female faculty and graduate students as they advance along their career paths. She also has been a member of the Multicultural Pedagogy Research Group (which won the Joseph T. Taylor Excellence in Diversity Award in 2010) and has been very engaged with the Multicultural Teaching and Learning Institute. She also was admitted to FACET in 2010, Indiana University's Teaching Academy, largely based on her demonstrated excellence and leadership in the areas of mentoring and multicultural education.

I have nominated Leslie for this award previously, and in my opinion the case for her candidacy is even stronger this year. I will focus on a few select 'new' pieces of evidence. First, in April, 2010, Leslie won the School of Science Excellence in Teaching Award. She also is serving as PI on a grant funded by the National Science Foundation entitled, "Factors that Affect the Likelihood of Prejudice Confrontation." This project involves collaborators from both Butler University and Purdue University, and it involves a significant emphasis on providing research experiences for undergraduate students. Given the competitive funding climate, particularly in Social Psychology, this award is most impressive and suggests that Leslie's leadership in mentoring undergraduate students in research is being nationally recognized. Funds from this award are supporting one graduate student (Gina Seaton) and will help several undergraduate research assistants (Alex Lindsey and Aaron Moss) to travel to national conferences to present research from this project. Leslie has continued to be an active chair and member of student undergraduate honors thesis and masters thesis committees, and 5 of her students presented papers at the 2010 Butler Undergraduate Research Conference. Two of her undergraduate mentees (John Blanchar and Alex Lindsey) received Top 100 Student Awards in 2010.

In sum, I offer my strongest possible recommendation that you consider Dr. Ashburn-Nardo for this award. She is a tremendous asset to our department and an outstanding mentor to our undergraduate and graduate students in psychology, and also serves as a campus leader in the area of multicultural education.

Sincerely,

Kathy E. Johnson, Ph.D.
Professor and Department Chair
Department of Psychology
Phone: 317-274-4930
Fax: 317-274-6756
kjohnso@iupui.edu