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Charles R. Bantz
Chancellor, IUPUI
Executive Vice President, Indiana University
355 N. Lansing Street
Indianapolis, IN 46202

Dear Chancellor Bantz:

I am very pleased to be asked to write this letter of support on behalf of Dr. Ulla Connor, a nominee for a Chancellor's Professorship at IUPUI. I have known Dr. Connor for 24 years, and I regard her as one of the leading applied linguists in the world in her fields of specialization. I am quite sure that I am not alone in this assessment of her reputation. She is a international leader in three different, but related, sub-fields within applied linguistics: Intercultural rhetoric, written discourse analysis, and English for Specific Purposes (ESP) research. Her reputation is based on innovative research studies, careful analyses of major questions, consistent high-level research productivity, and the ability to synthesize research and present significant insights on key issues in multiple research fields. She has published in all of the major journals in applied linguistics during the course of her career and she is consistently invited as a plenary speaker at conferences and meetings around the world. With over 100 articles, book chapters, and books, she has contributed in major ways not only to her academic fields, but also to the reputation of UIPUI as a research community of exceptional quality and integrity.

She is recognized world-wide as a leader (if not the leader) in the field of Intercultural Rhetoric (sometimes known as Contrastive Rhetoric), a field that she has been actively involved in for over 25 years. Apart from numerous widely cited research studies and publications, she has published the standard reference volume on the field (Cambridge University Press 1996). Dr. Connor is also internationally recognized for her research on written discourse analysis, spanning over 30 years. She has developed multiple approaches to the analysis of written discourse that have been taken up by other scholars to examine various professional genres and as well as the development of student writing.

And if being recognized as a leading scholar in two fields is not enough, Dr. Connor is also widely recognized as a leading scholar in the areas of English for Specific Purposes and applied corpus analysis. Her work in ESP centers on business communication, grant proposals, fundraising letters, conference proposals, medical discourse, and number of other functional genres. Her recent work on medical discourse and health literacy represents one example of a multi-faceted, and very productive, research agenda.

Her work in applied corpus linguistics over the past 15 years has also drawn considerable attention, both internationally as well as in the US. Dr. Connor has published three major books on research in this field in the past five years, and she is a leading authority on the applications of corpus linguistics to English for professional communication. Her growing reputation in this fourth sub-discipline is also well attested in her journal articles, book chapters and invited presentations at major conferences.

As one might expect of a professor working at the highest level of her field, Dr. Connor has also developed a strong track record in grant funding, a particularly uncommon achievement for an English professor. She has used these grant opportunities to significantly extend her research work in intercultural rhetoric, language uses in professional contexts, and corpus linguistics. Her more recent research interest in medical discourse has also received important grant funding.

One might well ask how one person can be so highly accomplished in four distinct areas of her academic field. The key is that all of her work centers around the study of written discourse and the abilities of writers to produce effective (or less effective) written discourse. Over the course of more than a 25 year academic career, Dr Connor has built one major area of inquiry upon the next. The earlier work on ESP and intercultural rhetoric provided a foundation on which to build further inquiry into written genres, their uses, and their production. In the past 15 years, Dr. Connor has used corpus linguistic methods to explore several applied linguistics issues. She has turned this innovative methodology to issues arising out of written discourse more generally and out of intercultural rhetoric, ESP, and textual genre analysis more specifically. Most recently, she has used the research foundations that she has already developed to examine the role of medical discourse and health literacy on patient well-being. Overall, her scholarly career reveals a consistent research trajectory that creates a powerful coherence to her extensive and significant body of scholarship. This strength of consistent inquiry is what one would expect of a leading scholar in any field. Dr. Connor certainly fits that description. I do not need to review the various awards and forms of recognition that Dr. Connor has received because of her work, but it is important to note that many other groups around the world have recognized and celebrated the scholarship of Dr. Connor and her contributions to her field.

One of the criteria for the Chancellor's Professorship is a very high expectation for professional recognition nationally and internationally. I can assure you that Dr. Connor more than meets this criterion. Indiana University Purdue University Indianapolis is very fortunate to have Dr. Connor as a member of its faculty and should celebrate her accomplishments by appointing her to the level of Chancellor's Professorship.

Sincerely,

Bill Grabe, Regent's Professor,
Program in Applied Linguistics, English Department

Northern Arizona University