MAYO CLINIC

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Faculty Appointments and Advancement
Academic Affairs/Dean of Faculties
Indiana University Purdue University Indianapolis
Administration Building, Suite 126
333 North Lansing Street
Indianapolis, IN 46202-2896

RE: Nomination of Dr. Susan J. Gunst for Chancellor's Professorship

Dear Selection Committee:

It is a pleasure for me to write this letter in strong support of the nomination of Dr. Susan J. Gunst for the Chancellor's Professorship. I have known Dr. Gunst for more than 25 years through our shared research interests in respiratory physiology. I got to know her even better after I joined Mayo in 1990 because of her links with Mayo colleagues, most notably, Drs. Robert Hyatt, Joseph Rodarte and Rolf Hubmayr. Over the past 10-15 years, our research interests in lung and airway mechanics have converged, so we frequently interact at national and international meetings. I have visited the Department of Physiology at the University of Indiana Medical Center on three separate occasions, and I've visited her laboratory each time. In my opinion, Dr. Gunst is now the world's leading expert in the area of length remodeling of airway smooth muscle, which is a key feature of physiology and pathophysiology of the airways. Her pioneering research in this area has explored the cellular mechanisms of length remodeling, and her discoveries now form the basis for our understanding of airway hyperreactivity in conditions such as asthma and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease. I have also worked closely with Susan in various leadership roles at the American Thoracic Society and the American Physiological Society. I have the highest regard for Susan and I believe that she is very well-qualified for the Chancellor's Professorship. I will specifically address her accomplishments in the following areas:

Professional Experience

Dr. Gunst obtained a BA in Biology fro Brown University, Providence, Rhode Island in 1973. She then joined Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, where she obtained a Ph.D. in Physiology. In 1979, Susan came to the Mayo Clinic as a postdoctoral fellow working with Dr. Robert Hyatt, and in 1983 she was promoted to the rank of Assistant Professor in Physiology and Biophysics. In 1989, Susan left Mayo joining the faculty in the Department of Physiology and Biophysics at Indiana University School of Medicine. In 1996, she was promoted to Professor of Cellular and Integrative Physiology. Susan's promotions have reflected her research productivity and educational contributions. As noted above, her pioneering research has explored the cellular mechanisms of length remodeling, which now forms the basis for our understanding of airway hyperreactivity in conditions such as asthma and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease. She has published more than 80 peer-reviewed manuscripts in leading journals such as the *American Journal of Physiology, Journal of Applied Physiology, Proceedings of the American Thoracic Society, European Respiratory Journal,* and the *Journal of Physiology* to name just a few. She is first or senior author on 62 of these papers. Her work is definitely of very high impact as evidenced by the frequent citation of her publications and her numerous invitations to present as a visiting professor at Universities around the world and her invitations to speak at national and international meetings.

Dr. Gunst has been continuously funded by NIH since 1983. She is currently the principal investigator on two NIH RO1 grants, one focusing on smooth muscle mechanisms in dynamic airway properties (which is now in its 23rd year), and one on regulation of actin dynamics in airway smooth muscle. She is also co-PI on another NIH RO1 grant which is now in its 13th year of funding. Dr. Gunst is currently the sponsor on two American Heart Association postdoctoral fellowships and one American Lung Associate postdoctoral fellowship.

Contributions to Education

Dr. Gunst is strongly committed to education. While at Mayo, she provided several lectures in respiratory physiology in the Mayo Medical School and she was the coordinator of the human respiratory physiology course for two courses. Since joining the faculty at Indiana University, Susan has continued to make major contributions to teaching at the Medical and Graduate School level. She has served on 12 Ph.D. thesis committees and has supervised nine MS and PhD. students, 24 research interns and 18 postdoctoral fellows. She is a highly regarded mentor as is evident from her participation on seven training grants.

Institutional and Extramural Service

Dr. Gunst is a member of several departmental committees at Indiana University including the Faculty Promotion and Tenure Committee, Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee, several Search Committees, IUPUI Faculty Council, Chair of the Physiology Department Steering Committee, and Physiology Tenure and Promotions Committee, and Graduate Education Committee to name a few. In addition to her institutional commitments, Dr. Gunst is a member of the *American Physiological Society* (since 1979), the *American Thoracic Society* (since 1981), *Biophysical Society* (since 1985), and the *American Society for Cell Biology* (since 2001). In these societies, Susan has served in major leadership roles, including chair of the Respiratory Section in the American Physiological Society, Chair of the Respiratory Structure and Function Assembly in the American Thoracic Society (ATS) and a member of the ATS Board of Directors.

Dr. Gunst has also made major contributions as a member of the Editorial Boards for leaing journals in the areas of respiratory and cell physiology, including: the *American Journal of Physiology: Lung Cell and Molecular Physiology* (since 1994), *Journal of Applied Physiology* (since 1997), *Current Respiratory Medicine Reviews* (since 2004), *Biochemical Journal* (2004-2007) and *Respiration Physiology and Neurobiology* (1995-2005). Susan has been an Associate Editor for the *Journal of Applied Physiology* since 2000, during which time I was Editor-in-Chief from 1999-2005). As editor, I was thoroughly impressed by Susan's abilities as an editor to make faired and reasoned editorial decisions.

Dr. Gunst has been a member of several NIH study sections including Lung, Cellular, Molecular & Immunobiology Study Section; Respiratory and Applied Physiology Study Section; Respiratory Study Section; and a member of the Special Emphasis Panel: Airway Remodeling and Repair in Asthma, to name a few. I was on the Respiratory and Applied Physiology Study Section with Susan in the early 1990's and I know firsthand that her reviews were thorough, fair and insightful. She certainly swayed decisions by other study section members and earned their respect. Undoubtedly this is why she has been asked to serve on so many review panels.

As you can see, I have the highest regards for Dr. Gunst as a scientist, colleague and friend. I have no doubt that she is an ideal candidate to receive the Chancellor's Professorship. If I can provide any additional comments, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

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