

11/30/2020

Dear Selection Committee,

I am writing to recommend Dr. Selena T. Rodgers to the position of Full professor. Dr. Rodgers possesses an *exceptional* intellectual and educational achievement and has an established reputation for excellence in teaching, scholarship and service.

Dr. Rodgers has a strong body of work, she has 8 published/in press articles, many of which are in major journals such as *Social Work and Encyclopedia of Social Work*. She is a prolific and responsive researcher, she is currently in the process of creating 3 manuscripts from current research on COVID-19, Black women and domestic violence.

Dr. Rodgers has an impressive leadership and service background. She is the chief administrator of the only Master in Social Work program in Queens, spearheading the four-part accreditation process. Her teaching and mentoring experience have earned her a citation in education from Former Queens Borough President Melinda Katz (2015) and an Excellence in Teaching Award at York College (2018). She brings an intellectual rigor, deep cultural competency, mentorship, passion, and honesty to social work that draws students from all across the nation to come and study under her.

Additionally, she makes time to support student advancement. She has been the faculty advisor of the Social Work Club for the last 13 years and has provided students crucial mentorship enabling successful graduation. Her leadership is not limited to student support, she's also served in the academic senate and chaired 4 hiring searches. In addition, she has a strong vision for growing social work at York College, and to advance that vision has written 6 grants, been awarded 3; including the approval of a federal grant.

In addition, Dr. Rodgers is not only concerned with improving the intellectual rigor of York students, she's interested in collaborating to help CUNY meet its mandate to educate all students, especially those who have been marginalized within the CUNY system. I've known Dr. Rodgers for one year, we met through the CUNY-Diversity Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Incubator backed by Chancellor Matos. The incubator is a highly selective project that is

working to create DEI ambassadors throughout the 24 CUNY campuses to shift the cultural climate as it relates to racism and other intersecting oppressions.

Dr. Rodgers' work is exceptional. She is a Diversity, Inclusion, Equity powerhouse. Her candor, congeniality and 18 years of work integrating DEI in her research, service and teaching was immediately apparent and put her in a category of her own. As a result, she is one of two leaders of the incubator at York College. She is someone who is so dedicated to DEI work that she was willing to launch the inaugural DEI ambassador program, while also launching her inaugural MSW cohort and accreditation process, two large undertakings.

She has been instrumental in growing DEI ambassadors at York College from infancy to a full team of aligned and diverse people. She has worked to connect her cohort to crucial and nationally recognized training to bridge differences in understanding of systemic racial oppression, equity and inclusion. She leads weekly cohort meetings, to allow the cohort to practice how to embody the cultural changes theorized about to transform an implicitly biased academic culture to be equitable at all levels. Through Dr. Rodgers leadership, the York College DEI Ambassadors are already creating meaningful changes around systemic racism on search committees, inclusive classrooms culture, and in the student club system.

For her outstanding leadership, scholarship, and service within York College and beyond, I fully support Dr. Rodgers advancement to Full Professor.

Please do not hesitate to contact me with any further questions.

Sincerely,

Aysa Gray

Co-Director/Facilitator, The CUNY Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Incubator

Associate Director, The Center for Ethnic, Racial and Religious Understanding (CERRU)