

March 26, 2015

Re: Letter of Recommendation for Kevin C. Dean

Dear Review Committee Members,

I am delighted to provide my unqualified support for Kevin C. Dean's candidacy. I cannot imagine that there are many people –if any at all- more qualified for educational leadership given his training, personal background, interests and experience.

I have known Kevin for three years and enjoyed supporting his quick rise at Urban Scholars from part-time instructor, to Lead Teacher, to full-time Assistant Director. Each step of the way Kevin has exhibited a drive for excellence and an awareness for education best practice that has been unrivaled by his peers. In order to provide a fuller portrait of Kevin and his abilities I am going to spend a little time discussing his performance across the areas I have observed.

Kevin first joined us as a part-time instructor in 2011 when we selected him to teach a self-designed 12 grade ELA course entitled "Self-Discovery and through Reading and Writing". Kevin was clear that, in order to succeed in college, Boston Public School students should be able to exhibit a high level proficiency to their reading comprehension and writing. Kevin's clear vision for what our students (first generation and low-income) should and could achieve was implemented with professionalism, high levels of engagement, and high expectations for student performance.

These qualities of professionalism, student engagement, and high performance would emerge as regular hallmarks of Kevin's work as an educator and dove-tailed with a strong sense of social justice and equity and inclusion for our students. These values would become apparent as Kevin taught a self-designed SAT with a sense of urgency that communicated his strong desire to have all our students realize the advantages of attending college.

Due to Kevin's strong work ethic and obvious skill as educational leader I asked him to assume the role of Lead Teacher for our intensive seven week Summer Institute. In this role Kevin did not disappoint; rather, he proceeded to envision and implement new structures to support rigorous instruction across 12 courses (grades 6-12) while simultaneously teaching 3 courses of his own. During this time Kevin generously gave his time to new teachers providing frequent 1-on-1 support and feedback on lesson planning and student assessment while developing from the ground-up a classroom observation and evaluation system that has been continually refined for effectiveness and its ability to improve outcomes. In addition Kevin presided over weekly teachers meetings and encouraged the active exchange of ideas, strategies and student information across disciplines. Kevin's efforts helped to initiate a more collaborative culture among the summer's teachers and students and teachers alike reported that this was the strongest summer program they had experienced at Urban Scholars. These educators,

under his guidance and recommendation, have successfully pursued teaching positions or have been reinvigorated in their own current practice by his leadership and inspiration. The amount of returning teachers year-in and year-out is a testament to his ability to improve the practice of a wide variety of educators and retain excellent employees.

When he accepted the position of Assistant Director as I found him to be a splendid partner for advancing the vision of achievement at Urban Scholars.

In addition to academic leadership I have enjoyed working with Kevin on ways to promote a healthy organizational culture for both students and staff. He has been instrumental in enhancing retention of high achieving students and staff so that our energy can be spent on programming and increasing achievement outcomes rather than on transition, recruitment and onboarding activities. He has taken it upon himself to strengthen program policies, systems, and structures including developing staff and student handbooks, implement a new programming framework, and serving as the consistent and personable program administrator. Kevin has demonstrated entrepreneurial prowess and has successfully developed our Academic Achievement Academy and enrichment activities as a key retention strategy to be enjoyed by both students and staff. In a short amount of time Kevin has brokered enrichment and instructional partnerships with the Institute for Contemporary Art, Theatre Espresso, Boston College, The Edward M Kennedy Institute, and a number of departments here at UMass Boston. As a result students and staff have had more access to critical opportunities such as on and off-campus internships, university courses, service learning opportunities, and more.

Kevin's departure from Urban Scholars is certainly bitter-sweet. His numerous contributions and commitment to providing students with exceptional programming are numerous; however, I am proud to be able to support his desire to realize his vision and skills as a school leader. He is clearly capable of successfully tackling the responsibilities required of any educational leader, and I cannot imagine anyone anywhere more qualified for your position than Kevin Dean.

If I can be of further assistance please let me know.

Regards,



David Lemmel, PhD

Director, Urban Scholars Program-UMass Boston

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December 22, 2014

To whom it may concern:

It is my true pleasure to recommend Kevin Dean to you. For three years, he has been an invaluable part of our Urban Scholars Program, which is a year-round program that identifies and prepares Boston's gifted and talented urban youth (ages 11-19), especially those who are low-income individuals and first-generation college-bound students, to successfully enroll in and complete college. As Assistant Director of Urban Scholars, Kevin has exhibited exceptional skills in instructional and organizational leadership as well as in program culture-building. Indeed, in my 14 years in Pre-collegiate Programs at UMass Boston, I have not met his equal in an assistant director position in these areas.

Kevin has been a driving force behind Urban Scholars' program evaluation efforts this past year. He has been instrumental in re-examining the program's scope and focus based on its budget and outcome objectives (particularly those concerned with increasing postsecondary completion rates). He has proposed a direction that will better meet the needs of program participants and will assist the program in meeting its outcome objectives and mission.

Kevin has significantly improved our program's retention rates by creating a more engaging, hands-on curriculum. He understands the importance of meeting students where they are academically; nonetheless, he holds high expectations for their performance. Working with our program's teachers, he has made our courses more academically rigorous as well as more engaging (for example, by adding a writing component to a theater course). To maintain this academic rigor, Kevin has put effective systems in place for hiring, training, evaluating, and supporting program instructors. Collaborating with two University of Massachusetts Boston faculty members, he is developing a "toolbox" to aid instructors as they help students build critical thinking and metacognitive abilities.

Kevin has also networked extensively with various organizations in the community and has integrated many of them into our curriculum and our program's cultural activities. For example, he brokered a multi-year partnership with the Institute for Contemporary Art to create summer-long workshops in DJ'ing, photography, and other topics. He worked with the MacArthur Foundation's Veteran's History Project" and National Endowment for the Arts "Poetry Out Loud" to enhance the program's history and writing curricula. Through his efforts, we also partnered with community partners to bring robotics courses to our science offerings.

In addition to his outstanding instructional, operational, and program development skills, Kevin is approachable on a personal level, and I think that students know he always has their best academic interests at heart. He has provided a firm, fair, and consistent approach when it comes to disciplinary matters, gaining his students' and their parents' trust.

Kevin Dean would enrich any school's leadership team, and it is without reservation that I recommend him. He has consistently gone above and beyond the expectations of his position. We will be sorry to see him go and will find it hard to fill his shoes! If there is any additional information I may provide to enhance Kevin's candidacy, I hope you will not hesitate to contact me at 617-287-5842 or at terri.slater@umb.edu.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Terri Slater Morgan".

Terri Slater Morgan
Director of Programs, Pre-collegiate Programs

BOSTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS



New Mission High School
A Pilot School of the Boston Public Schools
Naia Wilson, *Headmaster*

January 26, 2014

To Whom It May Concern:

It is with great enthusiasm that I write this letter of recommendation for Mr. Kevin Dean. I have had the pleasure of working with Mr. Dean this year as his mentor principal through the Lynch School of Education at Boston College. His expert teaching strategies and thoughtfulness in working with adult learners define his character and potential for leadership of true school change.

During this yearlong residency, Mr. Dean supervises and evaluates the English team. His consistent implementation of an observation and debrief schedule is proving to not only shift instruction but encourages deep reflection on the scope of the work and level of commitment required for the teaching profession. In addition, he is co-planning and facilitating the English team's school-based professional development series on the implementation of the common core standards and the development of interdisciplinary lesson. Further, he participates in all administrative meetings and decision-making processes.

Mr. Dean also works with the 10th grade team on student support issues and operational procedures. As a result of this work, the team revisited their practices of the policies outlined in the handbook. This work resulted in fewer students being referred to other teams including discipline and more issues being resolved within the team.

Indicative of Mr. Dean's character and problem solving skills is his approach to ensuring whole school systematic solutions. The administrative team at New Mission struggled to determine how we would ensure that the variety of strategies we were implementing across the school were actually resulting in improved PSAT and SAT scores. Mr. Dean immediately volunteered to develop a system to collect all strategies across grade level and content areas and conduct an analysis of the strategies to determine effectiveness. This level of in-depth analysis is critical to our school's ability to meet our whole school goal and our mission and vision of "college for all."

I believe that Mr. Dean is an exceptional administrator. His passion for our young people, his dedication to the work, and his vision and belief in excellence is evident in all that he does. Please do not hesitate to contact me directly if you have further questions at 617-212-4912.

Sincerely,

Naia Wilson
Headmaster

