CANDIDATE STATEMENT

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Dear fellow Senators:

I am entering the race for Chair of the Academic Senate in hopes of coming in second to Martha Pallante. The current method of selecting the Vice-Chair, now an office with its own distinct responsibility of running the governance committee, is to come in second in the race for Chair. I fully back Professor Pallante’s candidacy. I think she has traits that combine evenness of temperament, attentiveness to detail, and depth of institutional knowledge. These are invaluable in the service of the functioning of the Senate.

As for myself, I want to get “under the hood” of the Senate to do a tune-up. I think there are quite a few areas that need to be brought up to date after the recent spate of voluntary separations and retrenchments that have diminished faculty numbers. Of course, one of my first priorities would be to change the way the Vice Chair is elected, which will require the burdensome task of amending the Charter. Examining the parity of representation and the effectiveness of committees are also at the top of my list.

Should on occasion I be required to fill in for the Chair, I promise efficient meetings conducted according to the rules of order whose results are conveyed in succinct and *accurate* manner to the President and the Board of Trustees. I hope my talents at effectively moving through useful resolutions by clarifying language and exposing key issues have been on display in my four years serving as a Cliffe College representative. I believe the time in Senate is valuable not only as an important way the faculty and student representatives can address basic needs but also to exchange ideas for where the institution can go. That said, making discussion actionable also must be a priority given the multiple responsibilities our diminished faculty must command.

As an historian of (albeit the material end of) civilization, it is my core understanding that a university is not a business, but a public service. Universities were founded in the Middle Ages through the donations of the Crown and Church to produce the spiritual, legal, and philosophical guides necessary for the proper functioning of society. When the public universities that are YSU’s immediate ancestors were founded on these shores, they were backed by the populace based on the Jeffersonian principle that a well-informed populace is the foundation of any democracy. Universities should be agents of public good, not private gain. When I chose the route to academia, family members made me quite aware of the various other self-enriching paths I could have taken, but I chose a path of service. The noblest thing a university can do, in my opinion, is to challenge its students to dream, to explore far horizons, and to become global citizens. My actions will always reflect these core values.

Biography:

Since I have only been at YSU since 2017, and not everyone knows me, I thought I’d tell you a little bit about myself. I was born May 1, 1971, in Lexington, Kentucky. I consider myself a fourth-generation teacher on my direct maternal line (and on other lines am descended from teachers going back at least to the 1870s). I grew up going on Boy Scout campouts and playing D & D with friends when not devouring a book or mowing lawns for pocket change. I am a graduate of Lexington’s Henry Clay High School, a public institution. On a college trip with my dad, we visited Yale University and I fell in love with that institution’s Gothic architecture and amazing library and museum resources but would later feel that I socially didn’t quite fit there. I graduated with a B.A., double majoring in History of Art (with Honors) and Archaeological Studies.

I subsequently received a master’s degree in architectural history at the University of Virginia, where I like the vast majority concentrated on American architecture but was also the first to request and receive a minor field in Non-Western architecture. I worked as an archaeologist at Thomas Jefferson’s Monticello, and then spent nearly four years working for the Alabama State Historic Preservation office as their survey coordinator. I returned in 1999 to the academy, pursuing a Ph.D. at Cornell University. My A exams were in architectural history, Asian art history, and material culture of colonial environments. My dissertation charted how cross-cultural relationships could be charted in the architecture, urban fabric, landscape design, and urban imagery of Guangzhou (Canton), the Chinese port with the oldest Western presence. This formed the core of my book, *Enclave to Urbanity*, which was published by Hong Kong University Press in 2016.

In my years as a suitcase academic, I had a wide range of experiences teaching at a variety of institutions, from elite privates (Washington University in St. Louis), to land grants (Penn State), to regional schools (Michigan Tech, Western Carolina). I then spent eight years in employment of the Savannah College of Art and Design, today one of the most prominent private art schools. After only a year at their Atlanta campus, I was sent to help found the Hong Kong branch of the school. This was an exciting learning opportunity, but not always a happy one. I would throw my full energy into trying to make an experiment work, which would however ultimately fail (albeit after my time there ended). I developed close relationships with my students despite that I had no majors in my field—I was, just as I am now, supporting faculty. Yet I led them on excursions to Taiwan and South Korea, and every quarter to Macau to have cultural experiences on site—I kind of teaching I still so highly value. I also had the terrifying and emotionally draining experience of being there for my students during the 2014 Umbrella Revolution. Whether it was trying to contact students from abroad via social media when thugs from across the territorial border were brought into their neighborhoods to harass people, or whether it was trying to counsel students who arrived in class in tears after a night at the barricades, I was there doing the right thing when the school administration did nothing. As you might imagine, this took principles of conduct I had already ingested, and hardened them into an indelible part of my personality.

Sensing that a free Hong Kong had a limited future and that the branch of SCAD possibly had similar dim prospects, I began applying for positions back in the States in 2016. My mother’s contracting of a severe illness hastened my resolve to return (she ultimately would die just months after I arrived at YSU in 2017). I chose YSU because it was my option that was furthest north, seemed to have reasonable expectations at the time, and looked like a real university campus environment. I am very proud to have offered nearly a dozen different course preparations since arriving here, and also to have supported Professor Joe D’Uva’s efforts to found what we hope to be a biennial summer study abroad for YSU students in Glasgow, Scotland. I am particularly looking forward this spring to my students curating an exhibit at the Tyler History Center in conjunction with my special topics class “Arts of the Table.”

I live in an historic house facing Crandall Park in Youngstown’s North Side with my husband, Lok (who followed me out of Hong Kong a year-long visa wait), and our two rescued cats, Lisbon and Levina. I enjoy travel and took advantage of my time in Hong Kong to visit over thirty countries in Asia and Europe. I am an avid gardener and antique collector. I have as a volunteer written and delivered tours of the North Side for the Mahoning Valley Historical Society and am a member of the Mahoning Valley Chapter of the Sons of the American Revolution. Lok and I are also great supporters of Angels for Animals and aspire to volunteer when we can manage to allocate the time (a scarce commodity these days).