

February 20, 2024

Re: HETS Academy

To the HETS Academy Review Team:

Please consider this my recommendation for Ms. Leah Michel to participate in the HETS Academy. Leah currently serves as the Online Advising Coordinator at Southeast Missouri State University. I have worked with Leah for over a decade, and in that time have found her to be student-centered, creative, and extremely hard-working. She will be an asset to your cohort this year in the academy.

Leah supervises a team that follows a nationally recognized student service model – the Flipped Advising Model – that she helped develop at Southeast Missouri State University. The model places an emphasis on supporting distance learners, across all demographics, and has proven to retain students at rates higher than national public institution peers. As part of her commitment to continuous quality improvement within the model and the success of our students, recently Leah engaged in a redesign of our online orientation course. The redesigned structure provides more “just in time” curriculum and support to students as they are onboarded from their primary roles in life into a secondary life as an online student. Using her innovative and student-centered approach, I have no doubt she will be able to successfully develop and execute a project through your academy.

I could share many words of praise that I’ve received without solicitation about Leah over the years, just as I could write about many instances where she’s proven to be invaluable to our university. For the sake of brevity, I’ll choose to make these points specifically. Leah is relentless in her efforts to make the lives of students better through their experience at Southeast Missouri State University. Working one-on-one with students, she is both compassionate and firm, organized and knowledgeable. Working for the collective good of students in her role as a program coordinator, she is honest and ethical, and is willing to have tough conversations to ensure students have access to flexible learning opportunities.

I hope within the other application materials submitted with her file you have seen evidence of exemplary customer service, organization and efficiency, technical savvy, and the vision and passion she has for the work she does. Please consider her for your upcoming cohort.



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