



December 2022

Dear Selection Committee,

Drew Holtmann is one of the most dedicated and effective teachers among a truly outstanding staff at Duchesne Academy. Through his World Religions course, he invites students to understand themselves through cultures and beliefs very different from their own while also becoming more clear in their own values and beliefs. Through his second course, Catholic Social Teaching, Drew helps students to go outside their comfort zone and enter reciprocal relationships with others in our community.

Goal 1, criteria 4, of our Sacred Heart mission reads, "The school community welcomes and respects persons of all faiths and educates to an understanding of the religions and spiritual traditions of the world." Goal 3, criteria 3, reads: "The school, drawing from Catholic Social Teaching, educates students to analyze and work to eradicate social structures, practices, systems and values that perpetuate racism and other injustices." World Religions and Catholic Social Teaching are the capstone classes to a Duchesne education and required for all seniors. In the past five years, Drew has developed these classes, despite a number of Covid set-backs, into powerful personal experiences for our students. In World Religions, he has built in field trips to temples, synagogues, mosques, and other places of worship to break down barriers and build respect. In Catholic Social Teaching, he created a two week service immersion experience for all seniors as a capstone project to their Sacred Heart education. Drew put countless hours into preparation for this: communicating with colleagues to convince them of the importance of the experience though it would affect their classes; reaching out to service agencies across Omaha to locate possible placement options; developing a rubric and expectation for a cross-curricular report back to the class about the experience that included a economic evaluation of the situation each student experienced as well as literature about the topic; and finally, communicating all of these plans to our seniors and their parents.

Drew has proven himself a highly dedicated teacher and devoted to transformative experiences that broaden his students' understanding of the world in which they live. I recommend him wholeheartedly!

Sincerely,

Laura Hickman, Ed.D.  
Principal

