Nominations for: Julie Kane
Director of Digital Teaching and Learning / Digital Pedagogies
Sweet Briar College
Sweet Briar, Va.

Nominator: Jill Granger

1. Please tell us in 2-3 sentences why your nominee should win this award. What sets him/her apart?

What sets Julie Kane apart from other librarians is her energy and enthusiasm for all things academic. Impressively, she balances her demanding job responsibilities with her own graduate studies in English literature, and she is an active, published scholar. Julie shows that a librarian has intellectual passions that link her to what faculty members do for a living; she crosses those job description boundaries that divide us, and in so doing, help us escape our little professional compartmentalizations.

2. Please discuss how the nominee has helped you and/or others and made your experience of the library a more positive one.

Julie Kane tirelessly works with students and faculty, and has gone out of her way to help and mentor Sweet Briar students. One of the College's recent graduates, Courtney Cunningham (SBC Class of 2010) did a library internship with Julie in the summer of 2009. This experience helped Courtney decide to pursue a graduate degree in Library Science at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill's School of Information and Library Science. Courtney is now working in a tenure-track (and highly covetable) position as the Reference and Emerging Technologies Librarian at the Shadek-Facknthal Library of Franklin & Marshall College. Ms. Cunningham writes, "After spending nearly an entire summer as Julie's intern I became her assistant. I spent ten wonderful hours a week helping her manage Sweet Briar's electronic reserves and cataloguing duties and many more in her office just to talk. She has taken a welcome interest in my development as a librarian and even bought me ALA and other memberships as a graduation gift. In short, Julie is the reason I am now working as a librarian in a liberal arts college. There is no doubt that she will continue to inspire and encourage other students to join the field no matter where her career takes her." There is no doubt, indeed, that Julie, a first-rate academic librarian, is helping to train the next generation of top academic librarians.

Julie is always eager to help faculty with academic resources. Professor of Psychology, Tim Loboschefski, writes, "Julie Kane has been an integral part of refining one of my upper level classes in Psychology and her efforts have certainly helped to solve several major issues that have plagued the class for several years. The main course that Ms. Kane has assisted with—Adolescence & Adulthood, an oral skills seminar for majors—has always been problematic because there is a paucity of texts that cover just this period of the lifespan. Several years back I switched to a 'primary readings' approach and had been struggling year after year with obtaining copyrights, making readings available to the class, etc. When Ms. Kane came to Sweet Briar College and took on the herculean task of overhauling and coordinating our electronic resources/reserves, I was one of the first in line to benefit from her expertise. Despite having an entire system to overhaul, Julie was an absolute workhorse in creating the structure to deal with the ongoing needs of this course. Even

having her own massive list of 'prioritized' duties when she arrived, she did not waiver in helping to clear all the copyrights, assisting in finding suitable replacements when the permissions were prohibitively expensive, creating a mechanism to make sure that the readings were available to the class even during overhauls in the campus technology, and serving as an expert problem solver for all of the unexpected problems that occurred as we implemented the changes. The amount of not only individualized attention, but also competence, kindness, and dogged determination makes her an invaluable resource and, more importantly, colleague to have on campus."

3. How does the nominee make the college, community college, or university a better place?

Julie Kane makes the Sweet Briar College community a better place by being pro-active and positive. For example, she recently created a set of instructional videos to help students learn to set up a digital portfolio and submit assignments through it. The videos showcase Julie's quirky sense of humor and light-hearted approach, and are immensely useful. Through her initiative, all new students this year were instructed to set up an electronic portfolio over the summer and Julie gave them a simple assignment to write, akin to an advising essay that the College had been requiring of new students for several years. These assignments have already proven to be valuable for a number of purposes, and set the first point along the way for the students to begin to see their four-year college experience as a journey of self-development.

Julie's enthusiasm for helping the College's faculty incorporate digital humanities resources into their academic programs is contagious and genuine, as it grows out of her own engagement with these kinds of projects. She knows, from first-hand experience, that digital resources can expand the wealth of information available to the College's students, faculty, and staff. For example, Julie became interested in digital humanities through her love of and interest in the works of Charles Dickens. She contributed to Dickens Journals Online, a collaborative volunteer digital humanities effort to digitize the entirety of Dickens' journals (http://www.djo.org.uk/). She edited a scanned volume of All the Year Round, fixing machine-made mistakes so that the work of Dickens, Wilkie Collins, and other Victorian authors would be freely available online for all.

Julie's service to her profession helps make the College a better place. She has served in a variety of leadership roles on American Library Association committees, regularly publishes in library journals, and writes frequently for the library's blog. Julie constantly strives to learn new skills. One of her most important goals has been to become more technologically proficient and to expand her abilities and know-how so that she can effectively collaborate with faculty and students in digital projects. To this end, she secured grant funding to enable her to attend the Digital Humanities Summer School at Oxford in July, 2013.

Julie also makes Sweet Briar a better place because her contributions to the college community are not limited to her work as a librarian and digital humanities expert. She has made it a point to contribute substantively to the community in many other ways. She volunteered to serve as a first-year advisor, which is an important and time-consuming task which certainly was not a requirement or part of her job description. Librarians are not expected to be advisers, which entails additional, unpaid work, some of it over the summer. Her reputation for being diligent and also kind and pleasant has earned her trust among those who select advisers and pair them with students. She has served on many College-wide committees, including the Lectures and Events Committee (which allocates resources for visiting lecturers and special events and which she has co-chaired), the Faculty Grants Committee (which awards competitive professional development grants to faculty), the Admissions Committee, and the Instruction Committee. She made important contributions while serving as a member of the Digital Sophistication Strategic Planning Group, which was charged with

the mission of helping to determine how to prepare our students for an ever-changing technologically sophisticated world. Sweet Briar's president, Jo Ellen Parker, appointed Julie to direct a pilot project to integrate the use of iPads into student learning.   Julie's outgoing and positive personality is felt throughout the campus community, whether she is at the faculty table for lunch or riding with the equestrian classes or attending concerts, dance recitals, art openings or Honors events. Julie Kane loves being a liberal arts college librarian—and it shows.

4. How has the library, and the nominee in particular, had an impact on students and faculty and the teaching and learning process?

The Mary Helen Cochran Library at Sweet Briar College serves not only the college community, but also the local residents of Amherst County, Virginia, and the array of artists who reside at the nearby Virginia Center for the Creative Arts. For such a small institution, the College has an astoundingly large and broad collection. Its professional staff is small but dedicated, and in order to serve fully this liberal arts college, each librarian has had to pick up new skills and carry out tasks far afield from her or his original specialization.

In this vein, Julie Kane provides an extraordinary example of a librarian who has enthusiastically learned new skills and assumed new responsibilities. Over the last year, she has eagerly taken on a leadership role in the community to enhance the learning experiences of all students through the institutionalization of an electronic portfolio (or e-portfolio) platform (using the Digication system). Julie role in setting up the infrastructure, as well as campus-wide training was essential. Julie's strong interest in the digital humanities gives her a wonderful vantage point as she works with faculty and students alike to incorporate this technology into teaching and learning.

Her many contributions to the College have just been acknowledged by her recent promotion to full professor as of July 1, 2013. While Sweet Briar's librarians are granted faculty rank, as is the case at many liberal arts colleges, promotion in rank is by no means automatic or based on years of service. Librarians applying for promotion are vetted by the same rigorous standards as are the full-time teaching faculty—a process that involved faculty review of Julie's accomplishments as a scholar in her field, as a contributor of service both on campus and professionally, and as a contributor to the College's academic program, as appropriate to her position as a professional academic librarian. Julie Kane's promotion to full professor was endorsed by the faculty, Dean Amy Jessen-Marshall, and President Jo Ellen Parker, and unanimously approved by the College's Board of Directors at its June, 2013 meeting. In addition, Julie's job title has just been changed to reflect her additional responsibilities in campus-wide digital learning initiatives: she is now the Director of Digital Teaching and Learning and Digital Pedagogies Librarian.

Marcia Robertson, who as Chair of the English Department provides leadership for the College's writing curriculum and has therefore been very closely involved with the launch of the e-portfolio project, writes that, "The Digication e-portfolio system has its fair share of crotchets and glitches—and aspects which aren't especially intuitive. These cause puzzlement and frustration on the part of faculty members. Having Julie specifically there to handle questions and soothe anxieties and solve problems makes a qualitative difference in our lives. She does what no fact sheet or training video can do, and she's fast and canny and obsessive. Knowing that I can bring her into a class to help students soothes both me and them."

Even before she became a leader in the College's implementation of e-portfolios, Julie played a vital role on campus in encouraging faculty to engage with technological resources. For example, she was instrumental in popularizing the faculty's now-widespread use of electronic reserve, or e-reserve, materials. Cathy Gutierrez, Professor of Religion and Director of the y:1 program (the

College's effort to promote academic and intellectual engagement in first year students), writes, "Julie has been tireless in attending conferences and researching the latest technologies available for our campus community. Under her tutelage the e-reserve system has flourished from a few users to more than half of the faculty. The remarkable improvement that e-reserves makes in the classroom is noticeable daily: students have easy access to the reserve material that they can read on-line or print anywhere on campus. Rather than read (or not) reserve material in the library and not have copies to bring to class, the students now simply bring their laptops or iPads and we can refer to the readings together."

Eric Casey, Associate Professor of Classics adds, "Julie's enthusiasm about e-reserve, for instance, has proven to be absolutely contagious and all the professors I know now use it happily and confidently under her expert guidance. Julie has managed to make this such an important part of professorial pedagogy here that she secured the funding to train and supervise one of our best students to help with the now heavy e-reserve traffic. Julie offers a wonderful combination of cutting-edge technological savvy and an ability to communicate this so clearly that professors are much more willing now to try electronic teaching resources such as e-reserve."

5. How has the individual demonstrated leadership in the campus community?

Julie Kane has been a campus leader in so many ways: from her tireless and enthusiastic service in the library, to her membership on many College committees, to her volunteer service as a first-year advisor. But Julie's most obviously striking leadership role in the Sweet Briar community has been to help our campus incorporate digital learning initiatives into our academic program. As the quotes above attest, Julie took the lead role in getting our faculty to use electronic reserves for the library reserve reading lists of their courses—which benefits both faculty and the students in those courses. Our students' abilities to wisely and effectively make use of emerging digital information and media resources--what our president, Jo Ellen Parker, refers to as "Digital Sophistication"--is one of the cornerstones of Sweet Briar's recently adopted Strategic Plan. As mentioned, Julie played a vital role as a member of the Digital Sophistication Strategic Planning Group, which was charged with the mission of helping to determine how to prepare our students for an ever-changing technologically sophisticated world. The committee's work was integral to the incorporation of a "Digital Sophistication" platform into the Strategic Plan.

Julie then led, at President Parker's request, a pilot project to incorporate iPads into student learning. In the project, about fifty college community members (faculty, students, and staff) received iPads as part of a grant the president had received from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. Faculty were charged with finding inventive ways to improve their pedagogy using the iPad. Julie facilitated the entire process by arranging meetings for this group, running the group's Google Site, and serving as the gateway for the many queries and information that the group generated. The iPad pilot was a success and it has become a critical part of an even larger project—the College's seminar program for first-year students, called the "y:1" program. All y:1 students receive an iPad and learn to develop critical thinking skills, to integrate technology (ranging from digital information resources, to e-portfolios, to blogs, to social media) into their learning and study, and take part in the campus-wide common reading of a book that spans the disciplines. Julie continues to serve as a source of advice, resources, and inspiration for the y:1 faculty.

Julie also plays a leadership role in the College's implementation of e-portfolios. As discussed, she helped set up the infrastructure for using e-portfolios, and has helped to train faculty and students in their use, even developing the set of informative yet engaging training videos for this purpose. She is also serving as the co-facilitator of a faculty professional learning community (PLC) that was set up in the spring of 2013 to focus on how e-portfolios can be used to improve student learning,

particularly a student's ability to integrate and make sense of different learning experiences across the curriculum during her years at college. Specifically, each faculty participant, with Julie's advice and help, will design an individual e-portfolio project to be implemented in one of their courses in the fall 2013 semester, based on their own teaching interests and on feedback received from student online course evaluations.

Julie's leadership in digital learning initiatives is clearly recognized and acknowledged by the faculty and the administration, as evidenced by her new job title—Director of Digital Teaching and Learning and Digital Pedagogies Librarian.