

NOMINATION COVER SHEET
2016 Virginia Outstanding Faculty Awards

1. NAME Full (Legal): Jacqueline Bixler Preferred First Name: Jacqueline	
2. INSTITUTIONAL INFORMATION Institution: Virginia Tech Rank/Position Title: Alumni Distinguished Professor and Chair, Department of Foreign Languages & Literatures Year Rank/Title Attained: 2003 Years at Institution: 35 Campus Email Address: jbixler@vt.edu Campus Phone: 540-231-8632 Campus Mailing Address: 220 Stanger St., Foreign Languages & Literatures (0225), Blacksburg, VA 24061 Campus Communications Contact: -Name: Tracy Vosburgh -E-mail: tracyv@vt.edu	3. PROFESSIONAL INFORMATION Academic Discipline: Spanish Specialization/Field: Latin American literature and culture Type of Terminal Degree: Ph.D. Year Awarded: 1980 Awarding Institution: University of Kansas
	4. PERSONAL INFORMATION

Please check only one box:

- RESEARCH/DOCTORAL INSTITUTION NOMINEE:
- MASTERS/COMPREHENSIVE INSTITUTION NOMINEE:
- BACCALAUREATE INSTITUTION NOMINEE:
- TWO-YEAR INSTITUTION NOMINEE:
- RISING STAR NOMINEE:

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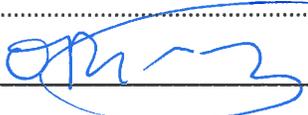
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Signature (President or Chief Academic Officer) _____ 

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Mission Statement for Virginia Tech

Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University (Virginia Tech) is a public land-grant university serving the Commonwealth of Virginia, the nation, and the world community. The discovery and dissemination of new knowledge are central to its mission. Through its focus on teaching and learning, research and discovery, and outreach and engagement, the university creates, conveys, and applies knowledge to expand personal growth and opportunity, advance social and community development, foster economic competitiveness, and improve the quality of life.

Summary of Accomplishments

“Ah, to be a *gringo* in Mexico. That's better than committing suicide. It's better than dying old from a disease or from falling down the stairs. To be a *gringo* in Mexico... that's euthanasia.” These are the words that the aged American journalist in Carlos Fuentes's novel, *The Old Gringo*, uses to justify his decision to die in the Mexican Revolution. While Dr. Jacqueline Bixler does not share his wish to face Pancho Villa's firing squad, she does consider herself somewhat of an old *gringa* in her 40-year-old passion for all things Mexican. The passage also helps to explain why she has devoted so many years to the study of a culture and a language that are not her own and why she travels several times a year to Mexico City, one of the most chaotic cities in the world, to continue her research on Mexican theatre. Finally, the revolutionary metaphor extends to her teaching, which features canons rather than cannons yet still serves as a revolution of sorts, an attempt to instill new ideas, to change society, and to make a new and better order out of an older, imperfect one.

Gringo is a term commonly used in Mexico, sometimes derogatorily, sometimes affectionately, to refer to those from the United States. People often find it strange to hear that Prof. Bixler teaches Spanish and studies Latin American theatre when she is clearly not Hispanic. Indeed, she was born in an all-white suburb of Cleveland and never heard a word of Spanish until her first language class in high school. After years of learning Spanish by what we call "the hard way," she has spent the past 35 years at Virginia Tech sharing her knowledge and inspiring her students to go abroad and to become fellow life-long language learners, teachers, and travelers.

Teaching

Bixler's passion for the Spanish language and Hispanic culture began relatively late, when she was in the tenth grade, thanks to an inspirational teacher who possessed what she later recognized to be the basic ingredients of effective teaching: presence, personability, dynamism, knowledge, and wit. She likes to think that her own teaching would be described in similar terms. Whether it's an advanced grammar class or a senior-level class on literary analysis, she seeks to engage her students in the discovery of language and its beauty, richness, and cultural relevance. Her goal in any class is to make this learning process stimulating, challenging, relevant, and, above all, fun. Rather than "teaching" in a traditional sense, she strives to facilitate learning by helping students discover the connections between words and concepts as well as the connections between our own culture and language and those of the Hispanic world. For Bixler, teaching is a dialogue, a two-way street. As part of this dialogue, she creates a democratic, comfortable atmosphere in which the students' voices are on a par with her own and in which all feel free to speak without inhibition. Finally, she takes great satisfaction in coming to know each student personally and in knowing that they are aware of her concern for their well-being, both inside and outside the classroom.

Bixler believes that culture is not a separate subject but rather an integral part of language and of language-learning. Fluency requires an intimate acquaintance with the culture. Culture and language are, of course, best learned in the countries to which they are indigenous, so she encourages her students from day one to seek every opportunity to spend time abroad.

Bixler has received multiple teaching awards at Virginia Tech, including the Diggs Teaching Scholar Award, four College Certificates of Teaching Excellence, and the Alumni Award for Teaching Excellence. In 2003, she was bestowed one of Virginia Tech's ten Alumni Distinguished Professors on the basis of the lasting impact she has had on her students. Bixler views the classroom as an exciting, theatrical battlefield of sorts, on which she fires away with humor, wit, and a never-ending amount of energy. As a scholar of theatre, she makes each

class as dramatic, entertaining, and memorable as possible. More than just a "teacher," Bixler sees herself as a facilitator and a fellow student. Rather than lecture, she insists on dialogue, which often leaves her feeling that she is learning as much as her students as they are from her. A quote from 2010 graduate Jessica Earl summarizes her style:

Bixler was enthusiastic, knowledgeable, brilliant, but perhaps most important – approachable. She made an introductory Spanish class enjoyable, a fact which was evident from the nearly perfect attendance at every class from nearly all students. Moreover, it was clear she cared about her students, not only ensuring that they were happy, but also truly focusing on each individual's progression in learning the language. Bixler had high demands for participation and enthusiasm in class, but her aforementioned approachability and good-nature made everyone more comfortable. Whether the student excelled at languages or struggled to pronounce the basics, Bixler found a way, through her cheerful personality and passion for the subject, to extract participation and passion from everyone. It was clear by the end of the semester that she had yet another group of young learners to add to her "fan club" of adoring students, which I'm sure today likely numbers in the thousands. Whether these students continued their studies in Spanish or abandoned the language after a semester, I am confident that every single one remembers his/her class with Bixler.

Bixler's teaching scores have been at the top of the chart since her arrival in 1980. On a scale of 4.0, she averaged a 3.86 in teaching effectiveness in all courses taught between 1980 and 2010. More recently, during the five years before she became chair, Bixler's average score was 3.96. So far, on the new 6.0 scale adopted in 2012, Bixler's overall rating has averaged 5.93. Her students frequently use the following adjectives to describe her as a teacher: enthusiastic, fun and funny, patient, organized, knowledgeable, animated, approachable, excited, caring, and concerned. Her classes are described as relaxed and fun, yet at the same time focused and demanding. Students routinely praise her for her "never-ending positive attitude and energy" and her ability to help them achieve their goals. Years later, they continue to recognize her impact on their lives and careers. As former student Donna Bobbitt, explains,

While I was a student at Virginia Tech, *Dead Poet's Society* was a popular movie. In the film, an exceptional teacher challenges and inspires his students. At the end of the film, his students stand on their desks, proclaiming, "Oh, Captain, my Captain" in an outpouring of support for their gifted instructor who has deeply touched their lives. Dr. Bixler is the kind of professor for whom students would stand on their desks.

Bixler finds herself continuously evolving and growing as a teacher. Over the years she has developed the following courses: Spanish Translation; Love, Sex, and Power in Contemporary Latin American Theatre; Mexican Cinema; and an interdisciplinary graduate-level course on Mexican History and Its Literary Representations. While Spanish Translation is an introductory course on the theory and technique of translation, for a number of students it has served as a springboard toward a career as translators. Among her greatest achievements as a teacher, however, is the course that she created in 1988, Hispanic Theatre: From Page to Stage. Taught here multiple times and adapted at other universities such as the University of Denver, Penn State, and the University of Kansas, this course involves the reading and final public performance of several one-act plays in Spanish. One student comments, "The focus toward a final play with an audience created an incentive to work hard and to do the best I could. My pronunciation has improved a great deal. This class was not only a great learning experience, but also very fun." Other courses, such as Mexican Cinema & Cultural Politics and Love, Sex, and Power in Latin American Theatre, encourage her students to be active learners and critical thinkers. She believes that students relate and retain more if culture is presented in a visual

form, such as film or theatre. Years later, students write to tell Bixler how her classes have made them more sensitive toward issues like diversity, poverty, migration, and social injustice.

Ever open to the challenge of teaching something new, Bixler eagerly accepted the invitation to spend the 2006 spring semester in Riva San Vitale, where she taught European Fiction and Italian Film & Culture to 28 undergraduates from diverse backgrounds and majors. Likewise, she was thrilled to be invited to teach a graduate course on the politics of memory in Latin American theatre during the spring of 2012 at the Universidad Iberoamericana in Mexico City. Two of her students in this course subsequently published scholarly articles in *Latin American Theatre Review*.

Many of Bixler's students have been inspired to become teachers of Spanish. One of them, Jeanene Sims, says, "It is because of this altruistic, inspiring, and tenacious woman that I have become the caring, involved, and successful teacher I am today."

Discovery

Bixler's passion for all things Hispanic carries over into her scholarship. During the last forty years, she has sustained her love affair with Mexico in particular through frequent travel to conferences and homages in Mexico, collaborations with Mexican scholars and theatre practitioners, and her writing on Mexican theatre. Two decades of work on the theatre of Emilio Carballido, Mexico's foremost contemporary dramatist, culminated in the publication of her book, *Convention and Transgression: The Theatre of Emilio Carballido*, in 1997 by Bucknell University Press, followed by the publication of it in Spanish by the Universidad Veracruzana in 2001. This book is referred to as THE book on Carballido in both the US and Mexico and has been praised for the "rigor, depth, erudition, and cleverness of the author's analysis" (Priscilla Meléndez). Jokingly referred to as "la carballidóloga," Bixler has received numerous invitations to speak on his theatre at book fairs, homages, and universities throughout Mexico. In May 2001, she presented a three-day seminar on his theatre to over one hundred students at the Universidad Autónoma de Nuevo León. She has been invited to publish numerous essays on his theatre in Latin America and Europe, while in the US she has contributed essays for *Bucknell Review*, the three-volume collection on *Latin-American Writers*, and the *Dictionary of Literary Biographies*, for which she prepared a 60-page essay that covers Carballido's entire dramatic production. Since the 1990s, she has typically been the only non-Mexican consistently invited to participate in homages to Carballido. The ultimate honor, however, was the invitation to speak to a crowd of 2,000 in the Palace of Fine Arts in Mexico City following the death of Carballido in 2008.

Bixler is also internationally known for her work on the theatre of Sabina Berman, who has won fame both in the US and in Mexico with her bold, irreverent, and innovative dramatic attacks on Mexican politics, official history, and traditional gender roles. Berman is not only Mexico's foremost female dramatist, but also a theatre director, producer, and prominent figure in Mexican politics and culture. In a letter, Berman states:

I usually smile when I read interpretations about my plays: they are usually interpretations that are too simple or too complex, and often just off the mark. However, Bixler's writings about my play *Krisis* not only kept me reading without smiles. She inserts the plays in the context of Mexican history with such clarity, I felt myself understanding how the play, written with personal motivations, fits in my culture. My editor insisted on including it as a preface to the published script. By now she is well respected by every national playwright as one of the authorities concerning Latin American drama.

Bixler's publications on Berman's theatre have resulted in invitations to speak at conferences and universities in the US, Mexico, and Argentina, and to contribute essays to journals such as *Theatre Journal*. Her book on Berman, *Sediciosas seducciones: Sexo, poder y palabras en el teatro de Sabina Berman*, published in Mexico in 2004, is to date the only book on this dramatist. Likewise, her book on the late Víctor Hugo Rascón Banda, another one of Mexico's most influential and prolific contemporary playwrights, is the only one of its kind.

Bixler's research focuses primarily on those dramatists who use theatre as a vehicle to question, contradict, and subvert the "official" history that has been perpetuated for many years, in some cases centuries, by Mexico's ruling party. Recently, she has investigated the relationship between the theatre and the ways in which memory works to retain and recreate traumatic events of the past, focusing specifically on plays that concern the 1968 Tlatelolco massacre, in which hundreds of student protesters and innocent bystanders were slaughtered by Mexican troops just days before the opening of the Olympic games in Mexico City. It was a career milestone to have the fruits of this research published as part of the book *The Long 1968*, which deals with the significance and lasting impact of 1968 across the world, and in *Latin American Research Review*, a widely-distributed, interdisciplinary journal more concerned with history, politics, and sociology than with literary criticism per se. While her scholarship has centered on Mexican theatre, Bixler has also published on Argentine and Chilean theatre.

Knowledge Integration

Teaching, scholarship, and service have merged throughout Bixler's career. In 1992, she was selected as one of Virginia Tech's Diggs Teaching Scholars based on her emphasis on multiculturalism and her consistent integration of theatre as well as Latin American culture(s) into her teaching. This integration is most evident in the courses that she has designed, the most recent of which was in spring 2008, when she created a course on Latin American Theatre to coincide with the conference she was hosting that same semester at Virginia Tech. The students read and analyzed the plays that were to be staged at the conference and then participated in the conference, interacting with scholars, directors, and playwrights. In an earlier course, Latin American Theatre from Page to Stage, Bixler had the students read a number of short Latin American plays, from which they selected 3-4 plays to rehearse and stage publicly at the end of the semester.

During her years as Coordinator of the MA Program in Area Studies (2001-05), Bixler directed an interdisciplinary program that paralleled her own research on the intersections of Latin American literature, culture, history, and politics, and directed the theses of many students who continued on to a Ph.D. in Spanish, History, or Political Science. As part of this MA program, Bixler created a foundational topics course, Spanish American History and Its Literary Representation, in which she integrated critical theory, literature, history, and politics.

Perhaps the best example of Bixler's integration of knowledge and teaching is the study abroad program that she created and led in Xalapa, Mexico, from 2002-2010. The objectives of this program were to immerse the students in Mexican culture and the Spanish language and to share with them the joys of living and traveling in Mexico. Having pledged to speak nothing but Spanish, her students lived with Mexican families and took language classes. Bixler led them on local excursions during the week and on weekends took them to other places in Mexico, such as Puebla and Mexico City, where they learned more about Mexico's regional cultures and complicated history. In her mind, these were the most rewarding experiences of her career, particularly when so many of her "xalapeños" themselves became teachers and shared her passion for all things Hispanic. Unfortunately, this program has been on hold since 2010 due to the spread of drug-related violence.

Bixler has also integrated knowledge and service throughout her career, most notably through her work on the *Latin American Theatre Review*, the hosting of an international theatre conference at Virginia Tech, and the mentoring of colleagues, both at her institutions and others. She has been involved with the journal since graduate school, during which she served as the editorial assistant. Since that time, her responsibilities have increased from editorial board member, to book review editor, to associate editor, and to her current position as editor. In this capacity, she has the opportunity to serve not only her peers but also younger colleagues and graduate students who are just starting to publish.

In the spring of 2008, Bixler hosted the Latin American Theatre Today conference, which had been held five times at the University of Kansas since 1982 and once at the University of Connecticut in 2003. Over the course of five days, 115 papers were presented by scholars, dramatists and directors from the US and Latin America. Four workshops were offered on translation of dramatic texts, psychoanalysis/acting, masks, and the use of acting in the classroom. The festival side of the conference included nine performances from the US, Argentina, Puerto Rico, the Dominican Republic, and Mexico. While all events were well attended, one of the plays, performed in Spanish and sign language by *Seña y Verbo*, a group of deaf actors from Mexico City, drew a crowd of at least 300 spectators as well as a standing ovation from the audience. She developed an upper-level Spanish course in tandem with the conference. Students read, commented, and wrote on the plays to be performed at the conference, during which they saw the plays and interacted with the playwrights, directors, and actors. This course was without a doubt the most effective integration of knowledge, teaching, and service of Bixler's career.

Finally, as a mature teacher and scholar, Bixler enjoys mentoring her younger colleagues both at Virginia Tech and at other universities in the US, Mexico, France, and Spain. She not only reads essays and book manuscripts and assists her colleagues in preparing book and grant proposals, but also takes pleasure in guiding them through the pressures, perils, and politics of pre-tenure departmental life.

Service

If she were not such a "people person" and did not relish being surrounded by students and colleagues, Bixler probably would have published even more, but the truth is that she enjoys working with and helping others and simply finds it hard to say "no" to service-related requests. Bixler has served on many committees involving personnel, searches, strategic planning, distinguished professorships, and other awards, but is particularly proud of having served on the search committees that hired former Provost Mark McNamee, Vice President for Outreach and International Affairs Guru Ghosh, and current President Timothy Sands. As the only humanist on the recent presidential search committee, Bixler provided a unique perspective and strong voice in the selection of Dr. Sands as the next president of Virginia Tech.

The Department of Foreign Languages & Literatures at Virginia Tech enjoys the rare reputation of being an extremely congenial group of faculty. A true Tower of Babel/Babble, the department offers 12 languages to undergraduates along with an MA in Spanish and French. Bixler's tenure as department chair began in the summer of 2012 with a successful proposal for a Project GO (Global Officers) grant, which brought \$350,000 from the Department of Defense to the university, greatly boosted enrollments in the critical languages, and provided the funding to send cadets abroad for eight weeks of intensive language training in Chinese, Arabic, and Russian. The grant was recently renewed for a fourth time. Aside from the many languages offered within the department, Bixler has partnered with George Mason, James Madison, and

the University of Virginia in the 4-VA system, thereby making available to students and faculty courses in elementary Portuguese and Turkish as well as advanced Italian, Arabic, Chinese, and Japanese. Her role as chair of the department affords the opportunity to work even more extensively in the area of international affairs. While she enjoys working with committees such as the University Council on International Affairs, the International Educational Policies committee, and the Pamplin Study Abroad committee, she is most excited about the rapid expansion of the so-called "critical languages" – Chinese, Arabic, Japanese, and Russian – at Virginia Tech. Since the fall of 2012, she has hired several new instructors, added new courses and sections in each language, hired Virginia Tech's first tenure-track professor of Arabic, organized a week-long Arab Festival, organized a Japanese film festival, spent 11 days in China, where she helped establish a study abroad program, signed an MOU with the University of Daugavpils in Latvia, and established a major in Russian as well as minors in Arabic, Chinese, Japanese, and Italian. Her tenure as chair has also included the establishment of new study abroad programs in China, Senegal, Estonia, Latvia, Berlin, and Costa Rica.

A first-generation graduate herself, Bixler has done her utmost to make sure that students of all backgrounds have the opportunity to study abroad and to acquire the same education. During Bixler's tenure as department chair, the number of study abroad programs offered by her department has grown from 5 to 10. An example of her personal commitment to study abroad is the seven summers that she spent *pro bono* in Xalapa, Mexico, teaching and traveling with groups of up to 18 students. In one case, she funded the experience for an African-American student who had never been on a plane or left the state, let alone the country. This student went on to become not only fluent in Spanish but also Portuguese and now travels regularly on business to Brazil. Perhaps her most rewarding teaching experience involved an African-American member of the Virginia Tech football team in her large Humanities course on Spanish American Civilization and Culture. This particular student had somehow made it to the age of 24 without ever reading a novel. Not only did he read a novel for her class; he read all 430 pages of García Márquez's *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, a highly complex work that resonated for him. At the end of the semester, he thanked Bixler for introducing him to the world of literature and for turning him into a reader. These are the kind of small triumphs that continually remind Bixler that "teaching" is not just what happens in the classroom, but more importantly the knowledge and know-how that our students carry with them for the rest of their lives.

As one of the 10 Alumni Distinguished Professors at Virginia Tech, Bixler has been tapped to serve on a number of high-level committees and also invited to give talks to alumni groups both locally and at chapters throughout the country. In 2010, she was invited to give the December university commencement address, an address available at: http://www.unirel.vt.edu/audio_video/2010/12/2010-12-17-commencement-bixler.html. She has also been featured in the Virginia Tech *Spheres* magazine on several occasions, most recently in 2013, and on the university webpage: <http://www.vtnews.vt.edu/articles/2013/09/091313-clahs-bixleradp.html>. While the word "alumni" is commonly used to refer to former students, in Latin it also signifies "a nourisher, one who raises or educates." Within this extended meaning, "alumni," in Bixler's world, includes her own three children, the many junior colleagues she has mentored here at Virginia Tech, other universities in the US, and abroad, and finally the thousands of academic "hijitos" whom she has nourished and helped to "raise" over the past 35 years. Her current status as an Alumni Distinguished Professor is an honor that reflects linguistically and professionally what she does best and what provides her the greatest sense of reward and satisfaction. While she readily admits that her own scholarship on Latin American theatre is not going to change the world, being the old *gringa* that she is, she nonetheless likes to think that she has staged a little revolution of sorts by igniting in her students and fellow scholars a similar passion for Spanish and all things Hispanic.

Personal Statement

In the summer of 2012, I walked 300 km. of the ancient Spanish pilgrimage known as the Camino de Santiago. Though I'm not a very spiritual person, it seemed like I should be pondering something deep and fitting of a pilgrimage. But the happiness and invigoration I felt while walking made it difficult to think about anything much beyond the next *café con leche*. As I entered the last stretch of the Camino, I shared this conundrum with my three children. The youngest, a recent graduate of Virginia Tech, sent the following response: "I hope this has been a great chance for you to think back and reflect on how much you've accomplished in your life, and everything you've achieved to get where you are today." From that point on, I ceased to wonder about my destination, both literal and figurative, and reflected on the road already traveled.

My journey has been rather serendipitous. Raised in a blue-collar, all-white suburb of Cleveland, there was nothing international or diverse about my first 18 years. In fact, there was nothing, period, about my childhood or adolescence that indicated that I was going *anywhere*. My father, a boat mechanic, and my mother, a stay-home mom, saw no reason why I should go to college; girls were supposed to get married and have babies. I persisted, however, using the meager wages earned at a nursing home and working throughout college to pay my way. I chose Spanish as my major simply because I liked it, never suspecting that it would eventually become the second-most-spoken language in our country. After a summer in Mexico and a year of study in Spain, I was sold. With graduation looming, I applied to the Peace Corps and to graduate programs. The former had no need for Spanish speakers, so off I went to the University of Kansas, where I discovered the joy of teaching. My passion for Mexico, ignited during the summer of 1973, soon combined with a fascination for theatre. My mentor, George Woodyard, known around the globe as the leading expert on Latin American theatre, hired me to be his editorial assistant on the *Latin American Theatre Review*, where I learned what it took to publish scholarly essays and became acquainted with the leading scholars in the field. I came to Virginia Tech in 1980, thinking that it would just be for a short while and that I would then look for a school with a Ph.D. program in Spanish. By 1989, I had three children and knew that Blacksburg was where I wanted to raise them. More importantly, I knew that I wanted to devote myself to undergraduate education, that Virginia Tech was exactly where I wanted to be, and that there could be no job more exciting or rewarding than that of being a teaching scholar.

Tenured faculty at Virginia Tech normally teach two courses per semester, with the expectation that they will devote half of their time to scholarship and serve on at least two committees. While I enjoy all aspects of academic life, my happiest place has always been the classroom. As simple as this may sound, I love to teach and feel that my own passion for it is reflected in the number of former students who have themselves become teachers.

My approach to teaching involves three key words: *respect*, *relevance*, and *joy*. *Respect*, in my mind, is gained through one's treatment of another person, not merely through the use of a title. I tell my students to call me simply "Bixler," making it clear from the start that we share the same goals and that respect is mutual. The second key, *relevance*, comes into play in the way that I present the material. In a course on early Latin American civilization, for example, I emphasize the ways that ancient civilizations like the Mayans and Incas provided the basis for much of what we simply take for granted in today's world, like potatoes, for instance. Or how 400 years of colonial rule by Spain accounts for the violence and corruption so prevalent in today's Latin America. And finally, there is *joy*. The joy I feel as I enter the classroom is, I believe, contagious. In all the courses that I've taught over the past 35 years, never once have I been described as "boring." On the first day of class, I promise them that they will never be bored provided that

they attend class faithfully, that they arrive prepared for the session, and that they keep their laptop and cellphone tucked away. I set the students at ease by getting to know each and every one of them, familiarizing myself with their strengths and weaknesses, and doing all I can to bring out the former and bolster the latter. I make it clear to my students from the start that language learning is impossible if one is unwilling to take risks and to learn from one's mistakes. A constant stream of humor adds a layer of comfort, lowers inhibition, and allows for camaraderie. Outside the classroom, I take great pleasure in helping students jump through the bureaucratic hoops and determine the best path for their future.

During the past 35 years, I have published seven books here and in Mexico, as well as 67 single-authored book chapters and journal articles. I have participated in numerous international conferences and spent considerable time in Mexico, where I enjoy a reputation as the leading US scholar on contemporary Mexican theatre. While Mexicans in general are known to have a love-hate relationship with the US, I have never felt anything but welcome in Mexico. One of the biggest honors in my life was the invitation in 2008 to speak in front of 2,000 Mexicans in the enormous Palace of Fine Arts following the death of Mexico's most famous contemporary dramatist, Emilio Carballido. I've collaborated with Mexican scholars on conferences and edited collections and also been invited to give a number of lectures and keynote addresses in various parts of the country. Nonetheless, the international endeavor of which I am most proud has been the summer study abroad program that I set up in 2001 at the Universidad Veracruzana in Xalapa, Mexico. I was finally able to give my students what had been given to me in 1973: the chance to live in Mexico and to fall in love with the language, the culture, and Mexico itself.

While teaching and research intersect in the courses that I've developed and taught and in the summers spent with students in Mexico, the intersections of scholarship and service are most evident in my work as editor of a journal, as a mentor to junior colleagues, and as conference organizer. Now approaching its 50th year, the *Latin American Theatre Review* is the only US journal dedicated to Latin American and Latin/a theatre. My current role as editor is the fulfillment of a dream that started at the University of Kansas, where I served as editorial assistant to the journal. As editor, I oversee the selection and editing of articles, performance reviews, interviews, and book reviews for two issues per year. While this task takes me away somewhat from my own writing, I nonetheless value the opportunity to keep abreast of developments in my field and to help younger colleagues from the US and abroad refine and publish their work.

I've been at Virginia Tech for 35 years now and this has been my journey. I'm proud to call myself a Hokie and proud of all that Virginia Tech and this humble servant have accomplished throughout these years. I shall cherish the remainder of my journey here at Virginia Tech as a teacher, a departmental leader, and an Alumni Distinguished Professor. Even if my accomplishments of the past 35 years are not considered worthy of the SCHEV award, I have every intention of continuing to walk the same "camino." I will teach with passion and vigor, relentlessly promote study abroad, build programs in the critical languages, maintain my reputation as a scholar of Latin American theatre, proudly serve as editor of the *Latin American Theatre Review*, mentor and guide my younger colleagues, and lead my department toward recognition as the best foreign language program in the state of Virginia. I will, of course, develop a number of blisters on the way. But I will pop them and keep on going. I have an inkling of what my final destination will be, but for now I'm content to stay on the path and follow the same signs that I've been following all along.

Abbreviated Curriculum Vitae

EDUCATION

Ph.D., University of Kansas, Spanish and Portuguese, 1980
M.A., University of Kansas, Spanish, 1976
B.A., Ohio University, Spanish, *summa cum laude*, 1975

PROFESSIONAL BACKGROUND

Chair, Department of Foreign Languages & Literatures, 2012-present
Alumni Distinguished Professor, Virginia Tech, 2003-present
Professor, Foreign Languages and Literatures, Virginia Tech, 1997-2003
Associate Professor, Foreign Languages and Literatures, Virginia Tech, 1986-1997
Assistant Professor, Foreign Languages and Literatures, Virginia Tech, 1980-1986

HONORS AND AWARDS (selected)

Alumni Distinguished Professorship, 2003-present
University Commencement Speech, Virginia Tech, December 2010
Alumni Award for Teaching Excellence, 1994
Diggs Teaching Scholar Award, 1992
4 Certificates of Teaching Excellence, College of Arts & Sciences, Virginia Tech
Graduate School Honors Fellowship, University of Kansas, 1975-1979
Most Outstanding Modern Language Student, Ohio University, 1975

PUBLICATIONS

7 books
40 articles in refereed journals
27 book chapters
17 book reviews
15 interviews, notes, and other shorter publications

OTHER SCHOLARLY ACTIVITIES (selected)

24 presentations at international conferences
35 presentations at national conferences
24 invited presentations
7 public lectures and talks
Editor, *Latin American Theatre Review*, 2013–present
Associate Editor, *Latin American Theatre Review*, 2007–2013
Organizer, VII Latin American Theatre Today Conference/Festival, Virginia Tech, March 2008
Advisory Board, Grupo de Estudios de Teatro Argentino e Iberoamericano, Argentina, 2004–present
Member of Editorial Board, *Revista de Literatura Mexicana Contemporánea*, *Latin American Theatre Review*, and *Gestos: Teoría y Práctica del Teatro Hispánico*
Book Review Editor, *Latin American Theatre Review*, 1998–2007
Reviewer for Bucknell University Press, University of North Carolina Press, and University of Kentucky Press

TEACHING

Overall average teaching scores:
3.93 (4.0 scale) between 1996 and 2010
5.93 (6-point scale) since 2012

Courses developed (selected)

History and Its Literary Representation
Spanish Translation: Theory and Technique
Love, Sex, and Power in Latin American Theatre
Mexican and Central American Culture & Literature
Latin American Theatre from Page to Stage
Mexican Cinema & Cultural Politics

Advising of Graduate Students

Ph.D. Committees, School of Education: 4
Spanish M.A., Department of Foreign Languages & Literatures: 5
Curriculum & Instruction M.A., School of Education: 9
Area Studies M.A., Spanish, History, and Geography: 13

SERVICE (selected)

University

Department Chair Executive Council, 2015-present
Chair, Search Committee, Director of the School of Education, 2014-2015
Chair, Search Committee, Director of Global Education, 2014-2015
Presidential Search Committee, 2013
University Promotion and Tenure Committee, 2011
Search Committee for Associate Vice President of International Affairs, 2010-2011
University Task Force on Undergraduate Education, 2010
Board of Directors of Virginia Tech Services, 2009-2012
Latin America Strategy Committee, 2004-2012
Norris Hall Task Force, fall 2007
Provost Search Committee, 2000-2001

College

Dean's Search Committee, 2006-2007
Coordinator, Area Studies MA Program, 2001-2005
Personnel Committee, 1998-2000; 2003-2004
Committee on Excellence in Teaching, 1992-1995; Chair, 1993-1994
Nominations Committee 1986-1989; 1996-1998; Chair, 1988-1989

Department

Department Chair, July 2012–present
Personnel Committee, 1990-1991; 1993-1999; 2000-2005; 2006-2011; 2012-present
Chair, Spanish Search Committee, 2010-2011 (three searches)
Director of the Spanish Program, 1985-1990; 2002-2005
Director of exchange program with the Universidad Veracruzana, 2001-2008
Director of summer study abroad in Xalapa, Mexico, 2002-2010
Group Leader, VT Summer in Spain program, 1993
Scholarship and Honors Committee, 1983-1993, 1996-1997; Chair, 1991-1993

Excerpts from Letters of Support

Dr. Thomas Tillar, Vice President for Alumni Relations:

I have known Jackie for over 35 years and cannot think of an educator who is more deserving of this honor. In 2003, she was appointed as an Alumni Distinguished Professor, an honor reserved for select faculty who have made long-term and outstanding contributions to the instructional program of the university, thus influencing the lives of generations of alumni.... Not only is Jackie a strong and successful leader in the classroom, she has been active in leadership roles on campus and exemplifies a commitment to collaborative decision-making.

Dr. Guru Ghosh, Vice President for Outreach and International Affairs:

I have known Dr. Jacqueline Bixler for almost five years, during which she has served on several vital committees advancing the international agenda at Virginia Tech. I have been fortunate to witness first hand her intellectual acumen and her administrative prowess. Jackie is a stellar professional, an extraordinary scholar and colleague. Her clarity of presentation, sound judgment, modest dignity, and friendliness are widely appreciated. She has won the admiration of colleagues by her ability to reduce apparently intractable issues to manageable, almost elegant proportions. All of this, combined with her wit and clarity of vision, makes her one of the pleasantest people in the world to work with. Quite simply, Jackie impresses, energizes, and inspires. The Commonwealth is more strongly positioned in the world because of her commitment and leadership, Virginia Tech is a better institution because of her service, and I am a better person because of her collegiality and friendship.

Dr. Elizabeth Spiller, Dean, College of Liberal Arts & Human Sciences:

It is a very rare faculty member who truly excels across all areas of their professional life. When that happens, though, it invariably involves a faculty member who has successfully internalized and integrated the too often disparate missions of higher education in the way that we hope for. Jackie Bixler is such a faculty member: I give her my strongest recommendation.

Rhonda Pennington, Business Manager, Foreign Languages & Literatures:

Dr. Bixler has been selected to serve as chair on several university level committees. This is because she is a strong leader. I see these qualities every day as she makes decisions in her position as Chair. She is a forceful protector of the department, and always has its best intentions at the center of her decisions. Dr. Bixler almost seems invincible at times. She manages her time so that she meets all the demands and requests that are placed on her, she leads the department by example and with careful thought, and she is concerned about her staff and the bottom line needs of the department. She has been an inspiration to me in my position by showing she cares about me as a person, and by my observations of what a strong, female leader and professor can, and should, accomplish daily.

Dr. Nadine Sinno, Assistant Professor of Arabic:

Joining a new department can be overwhelming for any new faculty member. As I navigated this new terrain, having Dr. Bixler as my department chair proved to be invaluable. Her extraordinary mentorship has immensely contributed to my professional growth as well as the flourishing of the Arabic program. It is truly assuring to have a department chair that empowers you by trusting you to realize your professional goals, while standing by to offer counsel and practical help as needed. Dr. Bixler is extremely approachable, patient, professional and supportive. She will give an honest opinion while remaining open-minded about alternative options, guiding her mentees to reach optimal solutions without micromanaging them. She is a born scholar and educator, and this is evident in her everyday interaction with her faculty and her students. She truly realizes that the success of each faculty member is an honor to our department and university.

Dr. Elisabeth Austin, Associate Professor of Spanish:

Jackie's mentorship has been invaluable to me personally. Over the past eight years she has helped me navigate issues from publishing and tenure to difficult students and professional politics. Her door is always open and she makes herself readily available to colleagues. As I move through different stages of my academic career, I look to Jackie as both a model and a counselor: her advice is always excellent and her career trajectory provides hope for those seeking to achieve some balance between the personal and the professional spheres of our lives. Jackie enjoys her work, and her gratitude helps remind us all of how privileged we are to work as teachers-scholars in higher education. Jackie's influence on our department is significant and lasting. She inspires us all to embrace the joys of learning and teaching, and to work harder, and better, at what we do.

Lauren Williams, current undergraduate, Spanish major:

Dr. Bixler's CV is nearly as long as the 300-kilometer hike across Spain that she inspired me to complete this past summer. There are, however, probably many faculty members across the state with equally impressive academic accolades. What these measures of success fail to highlight is the quality that I believe most distinguishes Dr. Bixler: she possesses a unique ability to instill confidence in her students, to push them farther than they believed themselves capable, all the while being honestly committed to their success. I met her when I was a senior in high school, toying with the idea of minoring in Spanish at Virginia Tech. As a department chair, she had no obligation, nor the time, to entertain a high school student lightly considering taking Spanish classes in college; but she did. Since that day, the trajectory of my academic career has changed drastically. I will graduate this year with a degree in Spanish and hopes of pursuing a doctorate and becoming a professor. She has always believed me to be capable of more than I originally thought possible. She challenges, but does not discourage; her belief in me has always motivated me to rise to the occasion- to achieve more than I originally aspired. I believe a great professor engages students, challenges them, draws forth their individual strengths, and encourages them to apply those as they learn. Dr. Bixler exemplifies these qualities in the classroom and is shaping the future generation of educators outside of the classroom. I feel undeserving, yet incredibly grateful, that an individual of such high caliber chose to invest in me before I even stepped foot in a classroom.

Jessica Earl, BA, Spanish, 2010:

In 2008, I traveled to Mexico with Bixler and other students to spend a summer learning Spanish. From that moment on, I decided that my path in life would somehow include Spanish and Latin America. I am now a bilingual attorney in Puerto Rico thanks to that gentle push from Bixler when I was merely a teen to step out and explore a world outside my comfort zone. This encouragement is the greatest gift a professor has ever given me. I am certain that I am not the only ex-Bixler-alum who has a story like this - she inspires this passion in many. To me, Bixler is a personal mentor and someone who greatly influenced my life. To take a campus in rural southwest Virginia, like Virginia Tech, and inspire students there to take what they learn on campus and put it to use in our ever-changing global world is what truly makes a great professor. These are the qualities that better educational systems, and more importantly, better our future as a whole. Bixler sets the standard for what all professors should strive for.

Jacquelyn C. McCarthy Woodyard, BA, Spanish, 2007; currently ABD, Education:

Dr. Jacqueline Bixler exemplifies a life of service and career distinction, with a most unique touch of humility and humor. She is captivating in her passion for the Spanish language and cross-cultural experiences, and is relentless in discovering and creating opportunities to share the gift of those experiences with her students. I first met Dr. Bixler as an undergraduate student at Virginia Tech in 2005. I was fascinated with the Spanish language and decided to reach out to a faculty member to discuss the opportunities available for the field of study. True to her serving nature, Dr. Bixler agreed to meet with me. This meeting

changed the course of my life and career. In 2006, I traveled to Xalapa, Mexico as a participant in the summer study abroad led by Dr. Bixler. She took great care not only to organize this educational trip, but more importantly, she created a community among the students. She also encouraged each of us to extend the community that she fostered with us to the families with whom we lived for the summer. She provided us with the appropriate support while also trusting us to make the most of the opportunity. Dr. Bixler's approach to teaching carried with me into my career as a secondary school Spanish teacher. Her shared knowledge, humorous outlook, and passion for the Spanish language and Mexican culture were the foundation for many of my lessons, thus spreading the community she creates among Virginia Tech students.

Dr. Stuart Day, Associate Professor, University of Kansas:

Prof. Bixler is *the* preeminent scholar of Mexican theatre and performance in the United States. Given her outstanding international research profile—exemplified by her exceptional publication record and the editorship of her field's flagship journal—it is truly remarkable that she is best known not for the lasting impact she has had through her groundbreaking research, but for her outstanding mentoring of students. She has sent several former students to study advanced degrees at the University of Kansas. While they come from different backgrounds and have different skills, they share the profound, nuanced knowledge that they acquired from Prof. Bixler, and, equally important, the confidence that only the best mentors can instill in students—the confidence to feel that if they work hard they can excel, no matter their background or the hurdles they might face. I have experienced firsthand this uncanny ability she has to transform the lives of the people she encounters: I have achieved what I have as a professor because of her superb guidance.

Dr. Iani Moreno, BA, Spanish, 1988; Associate Professor, Suffolk University:

I credit Dr. Bixler for providing me with the spark to embark on a journey to higher education. She gave me the preparation and tools to succeed in graduate school. She was the only professor at Tech that recognized my abilities and encouraged me to pursue my dream of becoming a university professor.

Dr. Priscilla Meléndez, Professor, Trinity College:

Prof. Bixler's prolific research has influenced mine a great deal, as well as that of anyone working in the field of theatre. She has been extremely generous by mentoring young scholars, and her role as Editor of *Latin American Theatre Review* has left a mark on both the journal and on the field itself. I consider Professor Jacqueline Bixler a committed and serious scholar who will continue to increase the prestige of Virginia Tech and the state of Virginia through her commitment to the study of Latin American theatre, her growing national and international visibility, and her passion for teaching.

Dr. Gail Bulman, Associate Professor of Spanish, Syracuse University:

She is one of the main reasons I chose to focus my scholarship on Latin American theatre. This extraordinary scholar and teacher has served as a mentor, motivator, and inspiration to me since I was a graduate student. As chair of my own department at Syracuse, I am impressed by Jackie's energy, intellect, passion, and dedication to our profession and am grateful for the scholarship she continues to share with us.

Dr. Michael Brown, BA Spanish, 1997; Lecturer, University of North Carolina

As a Hokie myself, I associate the Commonwealth of Virginia's largest land-grant university with excellence, and no one embodies that more than Jackie Bixler. I was a graduate student in Family & Child Development when I enrolled in the first of five classes with her. Due to our interactions, my career path changed, and I completed a PhD in Hispanic theatre from Kansas, like Jackie. In graduate school, I discovered the extent of her reputation. People in the scholarly community know her as not only a prolific writer and the preeminent scholar in our field, but as someone who is approachable, eager to assist them in being successful, and an invaluable intellectual and collegial resource.

Additional Documentation

Selected web pages:

December 2010 University commencement address:

http://www.unirel.vt.edu/audio_video/2010/12/2010-12-17-commencement-bixler.html.

University webpage: <http://www.vtnews.vt.edu/articles/2013/09/091313-clahs-bixleradp.html>.

<https://journals.ku.edu/index.php/latr/article/viewFile/1452/1427>

http://www.collegiatetimes.com/lifestyle/festival-focuses-on-spanish-culture/article_dd47a223-f7af-5380-af0c-f508a00ddd62.html

Selected student comments:

Spanish 4334: Hispanic Theatre: From Page to Stage

This class was a wonderful experience that should be offered as frequently as possible, even if it means having more than one professor teach the class. This class is unique and different from all other classes FLL students take. We each had the opportunity to see our hard work pay off at the end of the semester. There aren't many classes that you can do that about. Bixler is also THE best professor for the job. She is enthusiastic, fun, and most importantly, patient. Most of the plays we read were interesting and hilarious. Class was conducted in a way that everyone was forced to participate in the discussion. This was a great experience overall.

This is one of the best classes I have ever taken at Virginia Tech. It was so fun and refreshing to have the chance to learn Spanish through acting. A lot stands to be gained from taking this class. Dr. Bixler is awesome and made the class what it was.

This class is one of the highlights of the curriculum offered in the Spanish department. Not only is academic work encouraged, but it also offers the student the opportunity to work on his oral proficiency skills. One of my favorite aspects of the class is the chance to get to know your fellow students better. You must learn to work as a group and to perfect your cooperation skills. Students are able to explore a completely new aspect of the language and program offered at Tech. This class definitely provided a highlight in my studies.

This was an excellent course and the instruction was the best I've experienced in the Spanish Department here. The class was both informative and enjoyable every single day. The course materials were never tedious and the plays we performed at the end of the semester were incredible teaching and learning tools. I loved this class.

I really enjoyed this course. Dr. Bixler is an excellent professor who teaches the subject matter in stimulating and interesting ways. The focus toward a final play with an audience created an incentive to work hard and to do the best I could. My pronunciation has improved a great deal. This class was not only a great learning experience, but also very fun!

Out of all the Spanish literature courses I have taken at Tech over the past five years, this one was definitely the most rewarding. Looking at all the plays through the eyes of a director or actor made me examine them more carefully, and appreciate them that much more.

This class was great because it allows the student to improve their oral Spanish by speaking enthusiastically and it also helps give the student a feel for theatre. Bixler was born to teach this class.

This class was absolutely amazing! The instruction was well done, and the first half of the class really made me look forward to getting on stage and trying to act. It was all such a success and I found it to be so helpful as a class for fluency, comprehension, and general linguistic refinement. Needless to say, I loved it all.

This was an amazing class. Prof. Bixler's motivation of the students was also phenomenal. I learned a great deal more in this class than I would have in a normal Lit. class.

Dr. Bixler was awesome! Our Spanish Theatre class was one of the best I've taken at Tech. I learned so much about performance and how plays are structured literally that is, how they differ from essays and books. The discussions of the plays during the 1st half of the semester were especially important, because they helped me understand and appreciate the works much better than when I read them on my own—this also helped in characterization when we actually performed.

Spanish 4984: Spanish Translation: Theory and Technique

Bixler never disappoints. She is awesome. Every time I take a class with her I always have fun. If there was a class equivalent of spectacularly amazing, it would be this class. I learned so much and my college career is better for having taken this class. Thank you, Va. Tech, and thank you, Dr. Bixler.

This class needs to be offered more. It was an excellent class that was very practical. I am so glad that I had the opportunity to take this course from Bixler who is very charismatic and knowledgeable. Her strictness really helped me learn more. The class atmosphere and composition really helped everything (especially learning). Thanks, Dra. Bixler.

I enjoyed this course b/c it's very practical. Prof. Bixler has traveled extensively in Spanish-speaking countries, so she has accurate knowledge of the variations in Spanish among countries. This is really helpful, especially b/c I've never traveled abroad. Prof. Bixler also made the class as fun as possible and is very animated. She obviously enjoys teaching and the Spanish language very much.

This class was an excellent way to refine grammatical elements of Spanish. The environment was extremely conducive to learning – it was relaxed, yet focused. The subject matter was very broad in that business majors, Span majors or Ed. Majors were all able to get a lot out of the course. Muy bien hecho.

Dr. Bixler is one of the most excellent professors I've ever had! She is organized, enthusiastic, humorous, and her class is very interesting. It is one of the most useful Spanish courses offered. All upper-level students should take this class!

This was an excellent class. I found the conceptual and theoretical foundations provided through the worksheets and textbooks incredibly helpful. Dr. Bixler's manner makes all student

feel comfortable speaking in class regardless of their competence in the Spanish language. This class should be offered every year and should be a requirement for Span. Majors.

I feel that Jackie Bixler is a great teacher. She really helped me through my semester, making all of my accommodations possible. I respect her for the fact that she doesn't let you get away with anything, but still keeps a great disposition. She is always very interested in helping all the students and takes great concern with them. Also, she is brilliant and funny.

Sra. Bixler is awesome. She cares for her students and understands them. If you have a problem, she's easy to talk to and willing to help. She also takes into consideration your abilities and doesn't bring you down if you are not up to par with everyone in the class. I love her. I recommend her to everyone.

Excerpt from Dr. Jessica Folkart, Associate Professor of Spanish, Virginia Tech:

Dr. Bixler is an extraordinary model of the ideals that professors strive to emulate. She has captivated alumni, current students, colleagues, national and international experts, and people outside the university community with her passion for teaching, her zeal for research, and the warm generosity with which she helps anyone she can. She is an eminently accomplished professional of far-reaching breadth, who has attracted a diverse and devout following.

Dr. Bixler has proven to be a rare find in academia: she is explosive in her energy and productivity, humorous and disarming in her dealings with colleagues and students, and insightful, supportive, and unfailingly generous in her mentorship. I often hear faculty in other fields and universities lament about a lack of leadership and guidance as they strive to progress in their careers, and it makes me all the more thankful that I can count on Jackie's advice on matters great and small. The mantle of her mentorship extends broadly, encompassing our entire department and extending to colleagues in other departments at Tech, as well as to colleagues in Spanish departments nationwide – even internationally. She is ever dispensing advice, giving feedback on manuscripts, organizing conference panels, shepherding people into her vast network of writers and critics. There are people one hears about who seem to be just too good to be true, and who inevitably disappoint when one works with them day in and day out. Jackie is the exception. She is a force of nature whose congeniality, insight, and unsurpassed energy invigorate all those affiliated with her. Whatever her task at the moment, she inspires everyone involved to move faster, farther, and more efficiently toward accomplishing their goal.

All teaching scores for past 10 years:

Semester	Course #	# enrolled	#respondents	overall rating 6.0 scale
spr 2014	3125	9	7	5.86/6.0 scale
fall 2013	3126	9	3	6.0
research leave, followed by first year as dept. chair				
spr 2011	4334	20	20	4.0/4.0 scale
	4334	14	14	3.9

fall 2010	3125	10	10	4.0
	3304	22	17	4.0
spr 2010	4124	20	18	4.0
	4124	16	15	3.9
fall 2009	5344	4	4	4.0
	4344	13	12	3.9
	3125	10	7	4.0
spr 2009	3444	26	25	4.0
	3444	25	23	3.9
fall 2008	3304	27	26	4.0
	3105	26	23	4.0
spr 2008	4344	14	13	4.0
	3126	10	9	4.0
fall 2007	3304	29	25	4.0
	3304	29	28	3.8
spr 2007	4334	32		no eval. due to 4/16
	3126	10		no eval. due to 4/16
fall 2006	3105	25	23	3.9
	4344	15	14	4.0
spr 2005	3304	24	22	4.0
	4344	14	13	4.0
	5344	4	4	3.8



Study abroad group in Xalapa, Mexico