

March 1, 2026,

Dear Mentored Student Research and Creative Activity Review Team,

As Ella's mentor for her *AXiS 46: Beyond the Court* design case study, my role was to support and challenge her as she developed a conceptually ambitious creative research project positioned at the intersection of adaptive design, luxury branding, and cultural relevance. From the beginning, Ella approached this work with clarity of vision and a desire to investigate how inclusivity could be elevated within a high fashion context rather than treated as an afterthought.

Ella's project was rooted in inquiry. She examined how a heritage minimalist brand such as Helmut Lang could authentically enter the adaptive market through collaboration with Molten, a company deeply embedded in basketball culture and wheelchair sport. Her research moved fluidly between brand history, consumer psychology, market growth data, and cultural analysis. Rather than assembling a collection around a trend, she constructed a strategic argument supported by evidence, positioning her design decisions within a broader economic and social framework.

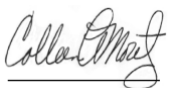
Throughout the project, I encouraged Ella to interrogate her assumptions and refine her rationale. She responded with intellectual maturity, strengthening the conceptual alignment between aesthetic language and functional innovation. Her incorporation of adaptive features such as magnetic closures and accessible construction methods was never decorative. Each decision was considered in relation to user experience, brand identity, and long-term market potential. This balance between empathy and edge is what distinguishes her work.

Ella also demonstrated exceptional strength in narrative construction. She understood that creative research requires articulation as much as execution. Her executive summary, industry analysis, consumer profiling, and growth projections formed a cohesive strategic vision. The project communicates not only what the collection looks like, but why it matters and how it operates within the global fashion system.

What sets Ella apart is her ability to think systemically. *AXiS 46* functions as cultural commentary, market strategy, and design innovation simultaneously. It reflects a designer who recognizes that contemporary fashion leadership demands interdisciplinary thinking, ethical awareness, and strategic foresight.

I strongly support Ella's recognition for this award. Her project demonstrates intellectual depth, conceptual strength, and a sophisticated understanding of how fashion can drive both cultural dialogue and commercial relevance. It has been a privilege to mentor her through this ambitious and thoughtfully executed creative research endeavor.

Sincerely,



Colleen Moretz, MFA  
Associate Professor  
Fashion Design and Merchandising  
School of Art and Design  
College of Creative Arts and Media