

Appendix G

Sample Letters of Recommendation

A. For an excellent student whom you know well

January 17, 2007

It is a true pleasure for me to write this letter of recommendation for Sandra Garcia, who was my student in Sociology 115, "Introduction to Sociology," in the winter term of 2006. Sandra is, without question, one of the four or five most outstanding students I have taught at Big State University in six semesters of teaching.

Sandra is a careful and creative thinker with an eye for details and a devotion to logic, which serves her well both in the sciences and outside them. She has the terrific ability to draw on her own experience and observations to develop thoughtful opinions on a variety of issues. Sandra already knew she wanted to major in biology when she took my course, but this did not diminish her intellectual curiosity about the topics we covered in introductory sociology. Her regular contributions to full-class discussions provided insight both for her peers and for me as an instructor.

Sandra was also invaluable in small-group interaction with her peers. Without my asking, she took on the responsibility of helping her classmates consolidate vast amounts of information into coherent sets of ideas, and she quickly became a study group leader. In addition, Sandra was very generous with her time and energies. I remember her meeting individually with a student from Thailand several times before the final exam to help him master all the material in a foreign tongue.

Sandra breaks the "scientist" stereotype with her writing: she was the best writer in the two sections I taught that semester. And what was perhaps even more impressive was that she took the task of improving her writing as or more seriously than any other student in the class. One of her essays was later published in the annual magazine of the best undergraduate essays written in sociology.

Sandra is not only an excellent student, but she is also personally delightful. She is as comfortable with herself as she is engaging, pleasant, and humorous. As I got to know Sandra over the semester, I became only more impressed by the wide range of her abilities—and by her modesty about them. She is an accomplished musician and scientist, both of which she does with a passion rare in undergraduates.

I wholeheartedly recommend Sandra as a prospective medical school student. In fact, I can think of few students whom I would recommend as highly. She will add a great deal to any incoming medical school class. I can also envision Sandra as a highly competent and caring doctor someday, which I say as a high compliment indeed. Please contact me if there is anything else I can do on her behalf.

Sincerely,



Peter Severs, M.A.
Graduate Student Instructor

B. For a good student whom you do not know well

5 January 2007

I am pleased to recommend Natasha Kincaid for admission to the Teacher Education Program. Natasha was my student in Biology 210 (Cell Biology), and she proved to be a model student. She is extremely conscientious about her work and about attending class and lab. Because of her hard work, she consistently scored in the top ten percent on all the exams and problem sets. Her work demonstrates an attention to detail and an ability to integrate material to create larger frameworks for discussion.

Natasha made intelligent and insightful contributions during full-class discussion, but it was in lab that her enthusiasm and teaching abilities shone. After the first week, she became the leader of her lab group, and I would often see her patiently explaining a procedure or a concept to her lab mates (and often those in the neighboring lab group as well!). She took the initiative to organize and lead class reviews before the exams, and other students told me afterwards how helpful these sessions were.

I believe that Natasha's strong academic abilities and her clear dedication to teaching make her a very strong candidate for the Teacher Education Program. If there are any questions I can answer, please feel free to contact me.



Mrinal Mukherjee
Graduate Student Instructor

C. For an average student

30 June 2007

I am pleased to write a letter of recommendation for George Gump as part of his application to dentistry school. As George's instructor for Math 235 (Set Theory), I found him to be a conscientious and hardworking student. The course was not required for George's major; he took it out of intellectual interest, and he approached the material with the same curiosity and determination that he applies in biology and medicine.

George's work on the problem sets and exams demonstrated careful attention to detail. He was also able and willing to articulate his questions about the more abstract notions of set theory, a genuine asset for many of his classmates and the class dynamic as a whole.

George is an extremely personable young man who seems equally comfortable with his peers and with faculty. He has talked with me about his goal of becoming a dentist, and I have enjoyed seeing such enthusiasm in an undergraduate about a professional career.

George's commitment to the field and his hard work in pursuing his goals will serve him well in dentistry school.

Please contact me if I can answer any further questions.

Sincerely,



Kelly Atkins, Ph.D.
Lecturer