

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 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