MU

MYTHIC UNIVERSITY

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November xx, 20xx

Letter of recommendation for Janet Lerner's graduate application

Janet Lerner is the best student I have this year, and I enthusiastically support her graduate application. She is highly intelligent, works well as a team member, and has demonstrated leadership potential. I enthusiastically supported her application for the student position on the Mythic University Board of Trustees for the same reasons. She was the runner-up for that distinguished post, and Mythic University lost out on a true leader. But I believe her time is yet to come.

Janet has taken only one class with me, but we have maintained contact through discussions in my office and on the squash court. She is an excellent student—she received an A in my class and was among the top two or three students in all facets of the course. She writes well, she is very analytical, she is articulate, and she is prepared. But the A hardly did justice to her performance in my class. A major component of this class was a local government simulation. Students played a variety of roles and dealt with issues given to them in the simulation textbook and by me, as simulation leader. We spent over three weeks of class time on this activity, and it allowed me to evaluate my students' strengths and weaknesses in some depth. Janet did not simply succeed in this simulation; rather, she *owned* it. The simulation included a zoning/development problem that is intended to be virtually intractable given the assigned roles and other simulation constraints. Janet beat the simulation. Her proposals were innovative, but within the confines of the simulation rules. She developed a solution, built the necessary coalition, developed creative compromises, and worked through to the proposal's enactment.

For her ingenuity, creativity, adherence to role, and enthusiasm, she received the class award for the most valuable simulation participant. But from my perspective her contribution went beyond this performance. Through the simulation Janet helped to set a tone, to take the simulation seriously and never say "it's not real" as would many of the other students. She showed leadership within the simulation and within the class.

Reflective now about Janet's contribution to the class, I would add one more point about the simulation. Janet was also the most severe critic of its design and my operational decisions. She challenged me to keep the simulation realistic and to avoid contradictions and implausible developments. Janet is critical, perceptive, aggressive, but not overpowering. Her criticisms were honest and appropriate.

Needless to say, I would love to teach a whole class full of Janet Lerners. She will make an outstanding graduate student. She has the intellectual capacity and she has the ambition. Based on what I have seen of her in the classroom and on the squash court, she also has the drive. And she will bring to graduate school a breadth rarely seen among graduate students: She double-majored in Political Science and Art History, a combination you do not often see. She speaks easily, and unusually perceptively, about politics, sports, the university community and academia in general, and anything else that comes up.

She will be a rare catch for any graduate school, and I will watch her career develop with great interest and high expectations.

Sincerely,
Janet Teacher
Janet Teacher
Assistant Professor of Political Science