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To Whom It May Concern:

I am a senior lecturer in the English Department at UW - Madison. I teach the English requirement classes for international students. I have worked here for 6 years, and I have been a teacher for over 20.

Xianda XU was a student with me for one semester last fall (2018). The class has a very heavy workload, culminating in an independent research paper. We even tell the students that although it is only 3 credits, they should plan for 4 or 5 credits of work. We also discourage students from taking more than 16 credits when they take this class.

Xianda was a wonderful student. He received strong grades in all of his assignments. As this class is a pass/fail class, students are able to content themselves with adequate work, knowing that they are able to pass, if only with a C, without affecting GPA. Xianda was not such a student. Although he received a high B on the second draft of his final assignment, he spent the extra time (during the time when all other classes become stressful and students have such little extra time) to revise his mistakes to receive a high A on his final draft. I would like to stress that this does nothing to help him on paper. His grade is not recorded anywhere, and he receives no special notice. Simply he was not satisfied with being adequate when, with hard work, he could be exemplary.

But this attitude did not surprise me at the end of the class, as Xianda demonstrated his work ethic this entire semester with me. He never complained about the many hours of homework, he always welcomed feedback, he worked well with classmates – and he always did it with a smile. This class is not enjoyable. The most I can hope for from students is acceptance. Xianda welcomed it. He saw the difficulties in this class as the gift of a challenge, and, as a true student, he thrived on it.

I have nothing but positive comments for Xianda. He is a wonderful addition to any group and will take full advantage of opportunities given to him, always with an eager attitude. I recommend him without reservation.

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