



May 22, 2025

Dear Reviewers,

I am writing this letter in support of my student Caden Miller's application for the OCCDF Public Service Scholarship for 2025. I have advised Caden for several semesters as his academic advisor and he has also taken multiple GIS classes with me. It has been really heartening to see Caden mature into a young adult and discover his career path forward as a GIS professional who wants to work with government agencies to solve local societal problems. As his resume shows, he has secured multiple internships in various types of local and regional government agencies, and he shows continued passion to returning and working full time at similar agencies.

Many of his peers are attracted to flashier jobs with high paying salaries, but I find Caden to be quite level-headed in what he wants to do with his analytical skills for agencies charged with improving civic life and protecting our urban and natural environments. Our curriculum is designed to teach students about the importance of place in our lives, and I am happy to see Caden absorbing that core message and choosing to pursue a career of public service at this young age. Paraphrasing his views about how he plans to use his geography and GIS education, he told me that he is motivated to use a systematic approach to data-driven decision making at every level of society to support communities, promoting sustainable solutions and equitable development. I'm drawn to the idea of GIS as a pivotal tool for serving the public, and how rewarding it feels knowing that your work is contributing towards the common good and the betterment of society.

Caden has been a great student for us. He clearly sees where he needs to improve in his classes and life and puts in more than the required effort time to get the best results. I have seen how hard he worked for my technically challenging class. He did very well in my classes, which are quite demanding, often requiring more than 10-15 hours per week. He never complained and did just as well as my graduate students. This shows how patient he has been and how well he applies himself after seeking advice. He has diligently worked to improve his academic standing and has left me no doubt that he will exceed all expectations in the final year. I have full faith in his ability to deliver for whatever agency picks him up to shape his future career path.

Caden can learn fast clearly and with the right exposure and support and encouragement, he will make strident progress as a public servant. I strongly recommend him for this scholarship. Please don't hesitate to contact me directly if you need more information about why Caden deserves this scholarship.

Sincerely,

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