



**Computational Social Science Program
Department of Computational and Data Sciences
College of Science**

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January 31st, 2017

Letter of Recommendation: Niloofar Bagheri Jebelli

Dear members of the selection committee.

It is with great pleasure I recommend Niloofar Bagheri Jebelli for the Summer 2017 Data Science for the Public Good Program. I have known Niloofar since she entered Masters of Arts in Interdisciplinary Studies (MAIS), with a concentration in Computational Social Science (CSS) in the Fall of 2015. I have had the opportunity to teach her in two of my graduate classes (Introduction to Computational Social Science; and Urban Analytics) where she did as well as PhD students, and also I worked with her on an independent study that focused on Urban Land Markets. Finally I am currently as her advisor for a MA thesis.

Niloofar, came to our program having a BA in Anthropology and Middle East Studies with a concentration in political and cultural behavior. She was motivated to understand society from the bottom up using computational techniques. Initially she had very little computer literacy or programming skills but over the last two years has developed these through courses or independent study. She is now fairly competent in agent-based modeling (via NetLogo), knows Python, and GIS (ArcGIS and QGIS). I find this impressive and for me shows that Niloofar has the ability to succeed in CSS or whatever subject she puts her mind to.

While many of the courses and topics have been new to her while studying here at George Mason she has currently a GPA of 3.89. This is quite impressive as the courses she is taking are the same of the core classes that our PhD students take (of which many already have a masters). Add to this that Niloofar also works part time is remarkable. I expect her to complete her masters thesis which explores urban development through modeling this summer or in the early Fall.

In talking with Niloofar, she has ambitions in pursuing a PhD. This summer program would give her a different lens and experience for studying the world around us. In sum, Niloofar is a good student who works hard. For this reason I fully support her application. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any further questions.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Andrew Crooks".

Andrew Crooks, PhD, Associate Professor.

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