



Student Success Center-Melrose
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January 7, 2010

Ms. Gay Perez
Chair, SEAHO Awards and Recognition Committee
1218 SASB North / CB#5500
Chapel Hill, NC 27599-5500

Dear Ms. Perez:

I have been asked to submit a letter of support for Dan Stypa as part of his nomination for the SEAHO Graduate Student of the Year Award. Dan is certainly worthy of this recognition and I am pleased to submit this letter.

I have worked closely with Dan in two capacities – as a CSP practicum student in the Student Success Center and as a member of his CSP master's paper/project committee. I consider Dan among the top 5% of graduate students with whom I have had the opportunity to supervise both practicum work and academic productivity. The following supports my assertion:

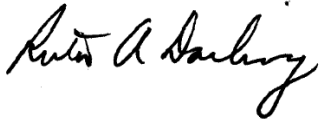
- As a first-year graduate student, Dan worked with Dr. Terrell Strayhorn on a study that addressed the needs of sophomore students, produced a pilot study, and has completed a presentation on the topic.
- Dan's research study and his findings were used to help provide a context for UT administrators as they formulated a program that focuses on the sophomore year experience.
- As a practicum student in the Student Success Center, Dan has completed a program proposal for a UT Sophomore Experience that includes an overall program mission and outline, web site text and a publicity brochure.
- Dan assisted with the design and implementation of the first academic success workshops offered by the Student Success Center that focus on sophomore students who are on academic probation.
- As part of Dan's Student Success practicum, he designed, implemented and conducted student focus groups that provided feedback on the Student Success Center's website, from the students' perspectives. The feedback is being used extensively as part of complete re-design of the site.
- Through his graduate assistantship in Housing, Dan has helped make connections that have led to collaborative, academic success programming efforts between the Student Success Center and Residence Life.

CSP practicum students contribute in many ways to the overall success of programs focusing on student learning and development. However, there are few CSP practicum students that make the level of impact on student success initiatives that Dan has made during his academic career at UT. Dan's

contributions helped shape policy decisions and program implementation decisions in several areas that impact student success across the University.

I hope that you will consider Dan as one of the top nominees for your award. In my opinion, he is certainly deserving of this recognition.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Ruth A. Darling". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a small dot above the 'i' in Darling.

Ruth A. Darling
Associate Vice Provost, Student Success