

Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies

January 9, 2010

Gay Perez, University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill
Chair, SEAHQ Awards and Recognition Committee
1218 SASB North/CB#5500
Chapel Hill, NC 27599-5500

Dear Dr. Perez and Members of the Selection Committee:

I am writing to support enthusiastically Dan Stypa's nomination for the SEAHQ Graduate Student of the Year Award. I have known Mr. Stypa ever since he initiated his application to our master's degree (M.S.) program in College Student Personnel, where I serve as his major professor and advisor. Additionally, Mr. Stypa and I have collaborated on a number of research projects and he has enrolled in several of my courses. Through these interactions, I have come to know well the *remarkable* quality of his work and I believe that he is a strong candidate for your award.

Rarely have I had the opportunity to support the nomination of a candidate whose achievements so closely match the criteria outlined for an award; but, indeed, Dan Stypa is no *ordinary* student. In the classroom, Dan is hard working, deeply insightful, always prepared, and remarkably self-directed. On special projects, he is incredibly productive, allowing us to take on some serious work together. For instance, Dan and I worked on two large research projects this year simultaneously that focused on (a) understanding the impact of sophomore year experience (SYE) programs on student retention and (b) the role that residential summer bridge programs play in easing student transitions. We co-authored an article that just appeared in *E-Source*, published by the National Resource Center on The First-Year Experience. Our work also has been accepted for presentation at two national conferences: National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA) and American College Personnel Association (ACPA). In his second year of graduate study, Mr. Stypa has already made significant strides toward developing his own research agenda and reputation as a *highly* skilled practitioner-scholar.

From the desk of:

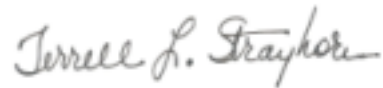
Terrell L. Strayhorn, Ph.D.
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Dan Stypa has other qualities that characterize a "Graduate Study of the Year," in my mind. He is a man of integrity, considerate of the opinions of others, and has demonstrated an abiding commitment to diversity and social justice especially when serving his home institution and students. Dan seems to have a knack for putting students first but deftly balances his kindness with enough seriousness to earn the respect of other students as a

credible and authentic administrator, colleague, and friend. In just two years, he has become a highly regarded, invaluable member of our program and department. Faculty members, as well as his peers, consult him regularly on professional matters.

By all accounts, Dan Stypa's achievements make him a strong candidate for the SEAHQ Graduate Student of the Year Award. I urge you to give him your most serious consideration. If you have questions or need additional information, do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Terrell L. Strayhorn". The ink is dark and the signature is fluid, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Terrell L. Strayhorn, Ph.D.