

January 5, 2009

Awards Committee  
Southeastern Association of Housing Officers

Dear Awards Committee Members:

With much enthusiasm, I offer this letter in support of Jonathan Lucia's nomination for James C. Grimm Outstanding New Professional Award. I met Jonathan when I interviewed for the Dean of Students role at Birmingham-Southern College in April, 2008, and have worked with Jonathan since June when I joined the Student Affairs team. Since that time, I have found him to be an exceptional professional and colleague who is undoubtedly deserving of this honor.

I first became impressed by Jonathan during my interview process. He asked questions about student affairs philosophy, research and publications, and other topics which indicated to me a sense of depth and purpose about his work. Since I arrived, I have discovered how well Jonathan reasons through the work that we do, whether focused on programming, policies, or simply the goals of our various offices. Jonathan comes from a counseling background with his master's work, which becomes immediately evident to me when he expresses concerns about a student situation or when I observe him interacting with students directly. He knows the importance of our work and the diverse care needed by students, and he consistently exhibits the decision-making, rationale, and interpersonal skills that make him an outstanding professional.

Jonathan not only excels in the intellectual and interpersonal aspects of our work however, as he always demonstrates a genuine willingness to do anything that is needed to meet the demands of a situation. I have worked with Jonathan in late-night drug situations, Honor Council cases, sewage issues, and organization solutions. In all these situations and many others, he constantly shows the flexibility, creativity, problem-solving, and commitment required to be an excellent and pragmatic professional, whatever the need or even crisis is. He also remains calm when others do not share that tendency, which helps foster good resolutions to situations.

Lastly, Jonathan exhibits both the confidence and willingness to learn that I find most vital for young professionals. He does not think he knows everything he needs to know, but rather wants to learn about and reason through decisions so that he can understand issues more deeply. However, he is also confident in himself and therefore contributes much beyond what his level of experience would typically indicate that he might offer. I think this last attribute will permit Jonathan to achieve the great potential I find in him, and thus make him an excellent nominee for this outstanding new professional award.

Thank you for considering Jonathan for this honor, and best wishes as you select from an undoubtedly talented pool of residence life professionals.

Sincerely,



David M. Eberhardt  
Dean of Students