January, 18, 2020

To Whom it May Concern,

I am writing in support of Jake Underland’s candidacy for Waseda University’s Global Leadership Fellows Program (GLFP) and his application to the College of The University of Chicago.

I am a lecturer in the Faculty of Political Science and Economics at Waseda University. I teach law, ethics, issues concerning privacy in the digital era, and Freshman English. Mr. Underland was a student in my Advanced Freshman English class during the spring semester 2019. Without resorting to hyperbole, I can honestly say that in my eighteen years teaching university in Japan, I’ve never had a smarter student. His intellectual curiosity transformed a rather mundane syllabus (not of my design) into a fascinating class which examined Critical Theory, Philosophy, The Frankfurt School, and the writings of Michael Foucault, to name but a few. His spark of interest in social theory forced me to be a better instructor and to explore areas untapped by past classes. Indeed, I had to work overtime to keep up with Mr. Underland’s vast and deep reading list. What a joy it was for me to be pushed in this direction and to introduce the rest of the class to the writings of Eric Fromm, Walter Benjamin, Herbert Marcuse, Noam Chomsky, and Jean Baudrillard.

Mr. Underland will be a welcomed addition to any program and to any professor’s class. His intellectual curiosity, his willingness to do the hard work necessary to begin to answer essential philosophical questions, and his absolute joy in learning simply for the sake of learning are all the attributes we as teachers prize beyond all others. He represents the next generation of intellectuals and social activists who will make our world a better place.

As such, I recommend Mr. Jake Underland enthusiastically and without reservation to be accepted into the Global Leadership Fellows Program (GLFP) and into the College of The University of Chicago.

Sincerely,

Hal Hisey