January 5, 2012

To: Admissions Review Committee

Graduate School of Social Work

San Diego State University

I have been asked by Dorothy Olsen to write a letter of recommendation in support of her application for admission to the San Diego State University Graduate School of Social Work in order to obtain the Master of Social Work degree. I am delighted to do so and believe that I can comment very positively in two areas, academics and personal maturity. Dorothy only took one course from me in the fall 2010 semester, which was entitled Contemporary Social Theory. It is a core course for the Sociology Department. As a core course, it is required and one of the most difficult courses that students encounter in the sociology major and minor. The reason that I mention this is I believe that Dorothy’s performance in this course can provide a valuable insight into her academic ability and potential for doing graduate work. But also I feel I saw something of the person that Dorothy is, a person of unusual maturity for her age.

Dorothy was one of the best students in her class which consisted of sociology majors and minors. The method of evaluation was comprehensive. There were two papers assigned and three exams; the exams consisted of short answer and essay questions. Theory papers are more difficult for most students because they require students to think critically and think at a higher level of abstraction. Dorothy received an A on each of her papers and did well on the exams. Academically, I would rank her in the top 10 percent of students that I have taught at San Diego State. I strongly believe that she would be able to handle the academic challenges posed by an advanced degree program.

I know the Social Work program looks at other than academic factors and even though I only had Dorothy for one semester, she impressed me as a person. She participated fully in class discussions, asked intelligent questions, and was attentive. I remember she spoke on behalf of a number of students in a very mature and respectful way; she was very persuasive and even got me to change the exams. In fact, it was her maturity which struck me the most. When I interacted with Dorothy, I always felt that I was interacting with a mature adult.

A personal observation: there was a blind student in the class, and Dorothy guided him to and from each class session. I do not know what the arrangement was, but it seemed that she was just doing it out of kindness. I believe without reservations that Dorothy would do quality work in the program and quality work as a professional. If I can be of further help, I can be reached at [psemm@mail.sdsu.edu](mailto:psemm@mail.sdsu.edu) or at my office NH 204 phone 594-5906.

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