October 26, 2011

To: School of Social Work

University of Texas at Austin

Office of Admissions

I have been asked by Krysten Santiago to write a letter of recommendation in support of her application to the Master of Science in Social Work Program at the University of Texas at Austin School of Social Work. I usually do not write letters of recommendation for students whose academic performance in my courses was not outstanding. In Krysten’s case, I am making an exception. I have known Krysten for almost two years; she was a student of mine in an upper division course called Wealth, Status and Power in the Sociology Department at San Diego State University. Krysten received a C for her final grade. The evaluation process was rigorous, but not excessively so; the class average was a C. There were two papers and three exams, so I believe a grade in the course, good or bad, would tend in most cases to provide an insight into a student’s potential to do graduate work. I do not believe this is true in Krysten’s case. I do not think the grade reflected her academic potential or her lack of concern in regard to the issues raised in class, or her lack of effort.

Krysten participated regularly in class discussion, and her participation reflected an engagement with and understanding of the material. Krysten also took advantage of office hours to discuss issues raised in class. From our discussions during office hours, I came to know Krysten a little bit more. She is a very intelligent, thoughtful person, who is very mature for her age. The main problem she was having at the university was not lack of ability but that she was working full time during the semester. I understand the problem; many students at San Diego State have the same problem, and I think it seriously disadvantages them for graduate school. But while Krysten’s situation was a disadvantage academically, I think it may have been an advantage in the sense that having to take responsibility for herself economically and for her education helped her mature as a person. I ask that you might consider these factors when evaluating her application. I recommend Krysten and hope that other letters of recommendation, her personal statement and her Graduate Record Exam will justify my belief that she will be successful in the School’s Social Work Program and also be a successful professional. If I can be of any further assistance, I can be reached at [psemm@mail.sdsu.edu](mailto:psemm@mail.sdsu.edu).

Sincerely,

Paul Tom Semm

Dept of Sociology, SDSU