March 4, 2013

I have been asked by Edgar Tam to write a letter of recommendation in support of his application to the San Diego State University Master of Science in Homeland Security program. I am a professor of sociology at San Diego State University where I have taught for sixteen years. During my tenure at SDSU, I have taught entry level, upper division and graduate courses. And I have taught over five thousand students. Edgar was a student in my upper division Contemporary Social Theory course and he worked with me, several other faculty members, and student groups on a project, the focus of which was quality education. I believe I can comment not only on Edgar’s intellectual ability and academic potential, but also on other qualities that make him an excellent candidate for the program.

The evaluation process for Contemporary Theory is very comprehensive and provides a good indication of Edgar’s intellectual ability and potential for excelling in a program that requires critical thinking and complex reasoning skills. The process consists of three exams, two papers and small group assignments. Edgar did well on the exams, the papers were well written, and he made noticeably positive contributions towards the small group assignment. He also contributed to class discussions and he took advantage of office hours to discuss issues that were raised in the class. He proved to be extremely articulate and possessed superior English language skills. I believe that Edgar is in the top 5% academically of students that I have taught at SDSU.

As I mentioned, Edgar worked with faculty and students in a project that arose as a result of large budget cuts to SDSU. Faculty and students were concerned that that the Administration, in managing the budget cuts, might forget that the mission of SDSU was a high quality education. Edgar was part of the committee which ran the entire project and he ran the internet part of the project. He was in charge of developing and

maintaining the website. He did both and he did an excellent job. He has impressive computer skills, but that which impressed me most were the qualities that he exhibited. He was self-motivated, able to work independently, and demonstrated exceptional initiative. He still worked with the group in a cooperative way. He developed the website on his own, but he discussed everything he did with the committee and was open to suggestions. He maintained the website and consistently kept the committee updated on the activity or any changes that he had initiated.

I believe Edgar would excel in any graduate program and I give Edgar my highest recommendation without qualification. If I can be of any further service, I can be reached at [psemm@mail.sdsu.edu](mailto:psemm@mail.sdsu.edu) or 619-594-5906.

Sincerely,

Paul Tom Semm

Professor of Sociology

San Diego State University