February 1, 2012

To: Graduate Admissions Committee

Department of Homeland Security

San Diego State University

Will Monet has asked me to write a letter of recommendation in support of his application for admission to San Diego State University’s Master of Science program in Homeland Security; I am happy to do so. Will was a student of mine two semesters ago in my Contemporary Social Theory course and he did an independent study with me last semester. Will was by far the best student in the Contemporary Social Theory course and one of the best students in the last five years.

The two theory courses, Contemporary and Classical, in the Sociology Department are required and are arguably the most difficult courses that students encounter in the Sociology major and minor. The reason that I mention this is I believe that Will’s performance in the Contemporary Social Theory course can provide a valuable insight into his academic ability and potential to succeed in a graduate program. As I said, Will was the best student in the class which consisted of sociology majors and minors and one graduate student. Several of the students have already gone on to graduate programs. The evaluation process consisted of three exams and two papers. Will received the highest total score on the three exams. He did equally well on the papers. Theory papers are more difficult for most students because they require students to think critically and think at a higher level of abstraction. Will wrote the best papers and got the highest scores on each of the two papers. Academically, I would rank Will in the top 1% of students that I have taught at San Diego State, approximately five thousand. I believe that he will be able to handle the academic challenges posed by any advanced degree program.

Will was such a good student I agreed to do an independent study with him on the subject of military intelligence. I only do independent studies with students that I know are committed to learning and capable of working without supervision. Will impressed me with his commitment to becoming more knowledgeable about the subject matter and he justified my belief in his ability to work independently. During the semester, we met every other week and I think that I learned something about Will has a person also. He embodies all the values we academics look for in a good student, but also, I believe, he embodies the values that the Homeland Security program is looking for in the students who enter its program.

I am happy that Will asked me to write a letter of recommendation and I highly recommend him without qualification. I believe that he 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.

Paul Tom Semm

Professor of Sociology

Department of Sociology

San Diego State University