May 22, 2013

To: CalStateTEACH

Margaret Noble has asked me to write a letter of recommendation in support of her application for admission to CalStateTEACH, Teacher Preparation Program; I am happy to do so. Margaret was a student of mine last year in my Contemporary Social Theory course. I teach two sections of the course each semester with fifty students in each section; Margaret was the best student by far of the two sections.

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 Margaret’s performance in the Contemporary Theory course can provide a valuable insight into her academic ability and potential to succeed in the CalStateTEACH program. As I said, Margaret was the best student in the classes 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. Margaret received the highest scores on each of the three exams. She 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. Margaret wrote the best papers and got the highest scores on each of the two papers. Academically, I would rank her in the top 2% of students that I have taught at San Diego State, approximately five thousand. I believe this is a good indication that Margaret would be able to handle the academic challenges posed by the program.

I know that teaching and credential programs look at other than academic factors and I can comment to a degree on those other factors. It was a diverse class and Margaret interacted well with the other students. She participated fully in class discussions, asked intelligent questions, and was attentive and respectful. During the time that I have known, I have come to think of her as a kind and thoughtful person, and very mature for her age.

I am happy that Margaret has asked me to write a letter of recommendation and I highly recommend her without qualification. I believe that she would do quality work in the program and quality work as a educator. 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