November 5, 2012

To: Admissions Committee

Department of Counseling

Master’s in Counseling Program

Idaho State University

I have been asked by Tarah Crosser to write a letter of recommendation in support of her application for admission to the Master’s of Counseling Program at Idaho State University. I am delighted to do so and believe that I can comment very positively in two areas: her academic ability and the type of person she is. Tarah took my Contemporary Social Theory course in the spring of 2011. 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 Tarah’s performance in this course can provide a valuable insight into her academic ability and potential for doing graduate work. I got to know Tarah better than most students because she worked with me, several other professors, and groups of students throughout campus on a project directed at maintaining high quality and accessible education at San Diego State.

Tarah 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. Tarah received an A on each of her papers and did well on the exams. She participated fully in class discussions, asked intelligent questions, and took advantage of office hours. It was easy to see that Tarah wanted to learn and was committed to learning. Academically, I would rank her in the top ten percent of students that I have taught at San Diego State (approximately 5000). I strongly believe that she would excel in any advanced degree program.

Between 2008 and the present, the California educational system has had $20 billion in budget cuts. San Diego State has faced, and continues to face, significant budget cuts. During these times, students and faculty have organized to guarantee that they have a voice in how the university will respond to the budget cuts. The semester Tarah was in my class she was active in organizing and planning an agenda for the students and faculty involved. I worked closely with her. Even though she was graduating, she was concerned about what type of education others would receive at SDSU and she was concerned about how budget cuts would exclude certain groups, minorities and underprivileged. While working with her, I know that I learned something about the type of person Tarah is: caring about others and committed to quality education.

I believe that Tarah has the intelligence, but also the personal qualities and value commitments that would make her an excellent counselor. If I can be of further help, I can be reached at [psemm@mail.sdsu.edu](mailto:psemm@mail.sdsu.edu) or 619-594-5906.

Paul Tom Semm

Professor of Sociology

Department of Sociology

San Diego State University