



ENGINEERING & SCIENCE UNIVERSITY MAGNET SCHOOL

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To whom it may concern:

I would like to strongly recommend Jake Casella to your undergraduate education program. Jake is a curious, lively student, whom I have known since teaching him last year in English 3, advising the Creative Writing Club (in which he was vice-president), and teaching him this year in English 4.

Jake is both intellectually curious and confident. In class, Jake is a highly engaged student, often contributing to our class discussions and collaborative learning. He isn't just the kind of student who answers questions, however, but one who also proposes ideas and original lines of thought. Thinking back, I remember frequently times where his contributions allowed us to take our class learning in a new direction, or offering an idea I could use to present our class text from a different angle. I can say with confidence that in the classroom he is an alert, active, and engaged thinker.

Creative writing I am sure plays a role in this, and he played a valuable leadership role. This kind of club is pretty difficult to lead, because for it to really work kids have to share their writing, and this makes them feel vulnerable. Jake, as a leader in the club, would always take the initiative to share his own poetry early in the meetings (or when there was an awkward silence), and this created a safe space for others to share theirs too. Not only that, but he's skilled at providing affirmation and constructive feedback, without ever criticizing someone's work. Because of his influence, the club became not just a place to write creatively, but also a place for the kids to grow together as friends. Adding to this that he is a committed poet always striving to improve his work, I see Jake as someone who values a meaningful life, ready to make meaning with others too.

I believe by accepting Jake you will welcome both a curious and interesting thinker and also someone who will be a positive influence on your community as a whole. He's the kind of person I look forward to hearing in the future where his path has taken him.

Sincerely,

Richard Cuminale