2012 Casebook

United States District Court
District of Massachusetts

DX 2

Case No. 1:14-cv-14176 (ADB)
Date Entered
By
Deputy Clerk

Sergei Liukin

School: Hillridge High School
Description: Independent private school on the East Coast, 100% of graduates go on to attend four-year colleges, many AP courses offered
Ethnicity: (left blank); dual citizen with the Russian Federation

Mother: licensed practical nurse
College: associates degree
(divorced in 1995)

Father: Computer engineer
College: B.A. foreign university, PhD from American university

Siblings: none

Tentative field of study: Mathematics
Commitment: 2 (1-5 scale: 1, absolutely certain; 5, undecided)
Intended occupation: Academic
Commitment: 1 (1-5 scale: 1, absolutely certain; 5, undecided)
College activities: Writing/literary magazine, orchestra
Commitment: 2 (1-5 scale: 1, absolutely certain; 5, undecided)

Class rank: none provided, but highest GPA listed is Sergei's, 64 students
SAT I: 800/800/800
SAT II: 800 Chemistry, 800 Math II, 800 US History, 800 French Reading, 790 World History

Extracurricular Activities:
Independent math research (11-12)
6 hrs/week, 52 weeks/year
MIT summer research program (11)
144 hours/week, 6 weeks/year
Top ten presenter
Math clubs (11, 12)
1.5 hours/week, 40 weeks/year
President
International club (9-12)
1 hour/week, 12 weeks/year

Athletics:
Weightlifting (11-12)
JV tennis (11)
6 hours/week; 8 weeks/year

Employment:
Math tutoring
2 hours/week

Academic Honors:
Cum Laude Society
National Merit Semi-Finalist
Top Scholar, Class of 2009
Mu Alpha Theta
National Honor Society

Summer Activities:
Research at MIT (11th)

Advanced Placement Test Results:

Physics B	5
History of Art	5
Eng Lang & Comp	5
World History	5
Calculus BC	5
French Language	5
Chemistry	5
United States History	5

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Short answer (most meaningful activity)

In spring of my sophomore year, I began studying analysis under the guidance of a professor at my local university. At first, I studied its fundamentals, learning the basics of two major subfields: real analysis and complex analysis. After several months of reading textbooks, I began to read about current areas of research, so by the spring of my junior year I had the background to work on unresolved problems. Last summer at MIT, I obtained results that characterized the behavior of a generalized version of a complex mathematical process. Working on research has at times been a trying experience, but the intellectual stimulation it gives me—along with the opportunity to make new discoveries and the joy of progressing towards the desired results—has made it a worthwhile endeavor.

Personal Statement

Almost everyone knows Thoreau's *Walden*. That is, they know that it was written by some guy in the nineteenth century who went to live in the woods but still returned home often enough to let his mother wash his clothes (supposedly). But what is truly fascinating about Thoreau's account is not the details of his life in the woods, but the central question that runs through it: What's it all about? Thoreau noticed that most people spend their lives in a daze, always aiming to acquire some new possession—be it house, carriage, or car—or a new, apparently better, position in life, without really knowing what they want, or why they are breaking their backs to pay, for instance, a mortgage for a house they might not have really wanted in the first place.

When I first read the book, in the hot and hectic final days of my junior year, it struck me that the situation is no better—in fact, far worse—in modern times. The quantity and variety of purchasable goods has increased exponentially, as has their availability, while the lot of most people has improved only slightly. So, naturally, I asked myself what *I* was in it for? What did *I* want? What's it all about for *me*?

Thoreau spent twenty-six months in the woods, simplifying his life as much as he could, in search of an answer to that question. And he filled up a book with an account of that time, so that others might—not follow his example, but be inspired to find their own path. I have not yet taken so extreme a measure, but I realized that I too had been searching for a more simple life, for a certain spareness and bareness that might allow me to see the world and myself more clearly. To see the world clearly, to see ourselves and our fellows in a true light: these are not small things, mere trifles to be cast aside as worthless; these are the things that I most want, because it is only with clarify of sight that we can attain real understanding.

As mathematicians are wont to do, I started with the simpler case—myself. Strange as it is, even that case is not so easy to determine, and certainty comes only in fleeting moments. I spent the summer at MIT, working on mathematics, one of my favorite things to do. Late one night, wide awake with the desire to solve the open problem I was researching, I withdrew to a quiet room that had been abandoned by my sleeping comrades. I sat and I read and I scribbled and crossed out equations, filling up page after page after page of my notebook, whose pages were already rough and ridged from having been wet. The clock ticked, and before I knew it, it was midnight. But the problem—even the particular subproblem I had set out to solve that night—still stood its ground. Time wore on, but, at last, my scribbling went for a page without the line of attack failing; at two pages,

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I was in full swing, my hand racing across the page and down lines with the speed of a rocket; at three pages, my heart began to beat in double time; and at five, when I wrote QED, the universally acknowledged way of ending a handwritten mathematical proof, I felt excited beyond words. I returned to my room in a daze, to find my roommate already asleep, his small digital clock reading one a.m. Yes, I thought, clambering into bed, still thrilled by the experience I had just had, this is it.

Anne Dillard writes about a similar experience. Frequently, in her book *Pilgram at Tinker Creek*, she writes about "the tree with the lights in it," the image she associates with the moments of ecstasy when—to paraphrase her—the world seems to be infused with a light that can be nothing but divine. "I live for it," she writes, "for the moment when the mountains open and the new light roars in spate through the crack, and the mountains slam." Yes, I think, reading this line for what must be the hundredth time. Yes: I, too, live for these moments. I'm in it for the moments when incomprehension falls like a blindfold from in front of my straining eyes, when the mental darkness passes like a covering cloud, and a full, bright light shines, and the problem that seemed impossible, or the proof that seemed infinitely out of reach, comes within my grasp, for the moments when I share Dillard's rapture, when the difficulty is overcome and I feel on top of the world.

They can come in many forms, these moments, but my favorite variety is the kind that stems from a difficulty surmounted or a problem solved. This is part of what attracts me to mathematics: here is one of the oldest areas of human thought but one that is still, in the words of Ian Stewart, "bristling with open problems." Many of these open problems are fascinating, sometimes by virtue of their sheer simplicity. One famous assertion, long believed to be true by most mathematicians, remains unproved in spite of its extreme accessibility; it is known as the twin prime conjecture and can easily be stated: there are infinitely many prime numbers p (numbers with no factors but themselves and the number 1) such that $p + 2$ is also prime. These kinds of problems hold a powerful allure for me, as they do for many mathematicians. Mathematics also attracts me because it offers an opportunity to contribute significantly to human thought, to leave an intellectual mark—be it ever so small—on human civilization. And it is very important to me to make such a contribution.

None of this necessarily lets me see the world and myself as clearly as is possible. But the search for understanding cannot terminate so soon; it lasts, I suspect, until the thread of life is cut and death is nigh. It is unlikely that Thoreau left his little house by Walden Pond with all his questions answered or without the appearance of new ones, but some of his questions *were* answered, and the questions he experienced doubtless helped him understand himself and the world better. Likewise, doing mathematics—and understanding *why* I love to do it—helps me know myself better as, in the words of Thoreau, I "go about my business," always looking to see more clearly and understand more fully.

Secondary School Report

Maturity beyond his years, intellectual curiosity beyond the ordinary, and promise beyond limits are qualities that define Sergei Liukin's character, his choices, and his future. Serge is the consummate student, one who is lead by his passion for learning and never limited by conventional education. He takes advantage of every opportunity to expand his opportunities, to leap into new learning environments and to open every learning door. From independent study, to travel, to research at MIT, Serge builds upon his high school

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experience and reaches out for more. Serge is a voracious reader; he enriches his formal education experiences with his eclectic choice of books and publications. Serge simply loves to learn, to share his knowledge and ideas, and to pursue intellectual development. But Serge does not limit himself to academia. Instead, he delights in sharing his expertise and reaching beyond the classroom.

At first glance, president of Mu Alpha Theta/Math Club may not evoke an image of excitement. But here, his team of "math-letes" are a dynamic group of competitors. As leader of this eclectic group, Serge has made membership and math competition fun. On any given Saturday members travel to regional and state contests and garner accolades and awards for Hillridge. Serge is a leader who inspires confidence. He sets an example of excellence and hard work with the addition of a sense of genuine accomplishment. Serge has made being in the Math Club an honor. Whether a leader or team member, Serge is committed to his responsibilities. As a two-year member of National Honor Society he is a much sought after math tutor. NHS tutors work closely with middle school students to assist them in the transition to the Upper Division academic program. Serge never turns down a request and has accrued an impressive record of service with the program.

The honors and accolades that Serge has earned at Hillridge range from Cum Laude Society, a place on the JV tennis team, Co-President of the Class of 2009, first place in the National French Exam, level five, to National Merit Semi-finalist. His academic interest is math but Serge is never limited to one discipline. As far as I can determine, Serge is the only student who will graduate from Hillridge with 13 AP courses to his credit, ranging from Calculus BC to AP Music Theory. His choices cover every academic discipline and he plunges into each subject with eagerness and a curiosity for knowledge. There is a mutual appreciation between Serge and his teachers. His teachers delight in his energy and intellect that he brings into the classroom and Serge has genuine respect and admiration for his teachers. The litany of praise across the curriculum includes, "Serge makes every day of teaching worthwhile." , "I commend Serge for his work ethic and the high standards he sets for himself.", "Serge is a remarkable student whose intelligence is enhanced by his insatiable curiosity and willingness to learn." , "Serge possesses a keen and nuanced understanding of the material we cover.", "Serge approaches learning with curiosity, a positive attitude, and a sense of humor." , "Serge is the student who always asks higher level questions that stimulate class discussion." All of these observations are right on target! But perhaps the most overreaching comment is offered by Serge's "Math-mentor", Mr. Zupan who writes, "Serge is the caliber of student that comes along once in a lifetime, if ever, to a teacher, or for that matter, to a school. I am privileged to be a part of his intellectual growth."

It would be the perfect "story-book" scenario to say that the road to intellectual growth, academic accolades, firm friendships, and amazing experiences has been smooth and straight. But that is not the case for Serge. He came to Hillridge early in his freshman year to finally settle down after moving 10 times and attending four different schools. His hesitation and tentativeness melted away as Serge began to embrace his new home. Serge's years of changes brought him a valued characteristic, independence. This independence has given Serge the ability to explore mathematics well beyond the limits of our curriculum, to teach himself tennis, to attain the highest score on the National French exam, fifth level after three formal years of study, and to reach for his highest goal: "I am to become one of the great contributors to human thought." He is a life-long learner who will take advantage of every opportunity in the classroom and in the community at Harvard, to live, learn, and contribute. Like his teachers and peers, I am privileged to know Serge and to have the opportunity to recommend him to the Admissions Committee at Harvard University.

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Hillridge Transcript

Grade 9	Final	Grade 10	Final
English 9 H	A+	English 10 H	A+
Algebra II H	A+	AP Calculus BC	A+
AP Physics	A	Chemistry H	A+
Western Civilizations	A+	Contemporary Issues	A
French I	A+	World Religions	A+
Health/Fitness	A	French III H	A+
		AP Art history	A+
		Concert Band	A+

Grade 11	Final	Grade 12	Final
AP English Language	A+	AP English Literature	
Adv. Topics in Mathematics	A+	Independent Study Math	
Biology H	A+	Abstract Algebra	
AP Chemistry	A+	AP Biology	
AP U.S. History	A+	AP European History	
AP French Language	A+	AP French Literature	
Concert Band	A+	AP Music Theory	

Teacher Recommendation 1

I have known Serge for two years, first as his AP Calculus BC teacher in his sophomore year, and as the teacher/mentor of his independent studies class entitled "Advanced Studies in Mathematics" in his junior year. Before I get into substantiating details, I would like to immediately express the nature of my recommendation.

Prior to my two years at Hillridge, I taught BC Calculus for five years in a large public high school, and eight years in two of the most prestigious independent schools in the D.C. area. I taught the strongest math students those schools had to offer. I had many very successful and several truly brilliant students. I do not exaggerate when I say that none of them could hold a candle to the genius of Serge Liukin. Serge is far and away the most talented math student I have ever had the pleasure of knowing, as well as being the most enthusiastic, the most creative, the most rigorous, the most disciplined, the most curious, the most intrinsically motivated, and the most accomplished. Add to this the fact that he is almost humble in his demeanor, always with a quick smile on his face and a kind word to others. He is the caliber of student that comes once in a lifetime, if ever, to a teacher, or for that matter, to a school.

Serge is a voracious student of mathematics. As a freshman, he read a Calculus text on his own. As a BC student in his sophomore year he became interested in Real Analysis and under my guidance read a text on that subject, and solved all of its problems. Towards the end of that year Serge became interested in entering the Siemens Competition in Math, Science & Technology. To that end, he spent his junior year working with a professor of mathematics at a nearby university. Under his guidance, Serge devoured a Linear Algebra text and a Complex Analysis text, and, in attempting to narrow down his choice of a topic

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for the competition, read a series of published papers on Complex Analysis. Also in his junior year Serge read a text on Mathematical Logic and began one on Abstract Algebra in my independent studies class. I have a bachelors and a masters degree in mathematics, and I stand in awe of the level of expertise Serge has developed in so short a time. Serge seems to have everything he studies at his finger tips; he has got an almost photographic memory. He has the natural ability to recall in minute detail practically any proof or solution he has ever read or composed himself. He has developed into an accomplished mathematician, writing beautifully structured, elegant and creative proofs, and almost effortlessly finds solutions to the most obtuse and complex problems. In recognition of his genius, Serge was accepted into a prestigious summer program at MIT. He completed that program this summer and produced a paper which is clearly on the level of an advanced mathematics graduate student.

When I reread this recommendation it seems like hyperbole, but I assure you it is not. Serge is a world-class intellect not yet in full bloom, but growing incredibly. Serge will make a great name for himself in the world of mathematics. It is an historic opportunity for a university to be a part of guiding his growth and success.

No basis		Below average	Average	Good (above average)	Very Good (well above average)	Excellent (top 10%)	Outstanding (top 5%)	One of the top few I've encountered in my career. (top 1%)
	Academic achievement							X
	Intellectual promise							X
	Quality of writing							X
	Creative, original thought							X
	Productive class discussion							X
	Respect accorded by faculty							X
	Disciplined work habits							X
	Maturity							X
	Motivation							X
	Leadership							X
	Integrity							X
	Reaction to setbacks							X
	Concern for others							X
	Self-confidence							X
	Initiative, independence							X
	OVERALL							X

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Teacher Recommendation 2

Mr. Serge Liukin has asked me to write you a letter of recommendation, and I am thrilled to comply. Knowing that you read hundreds, possibly thousands of student applications, and most of them glowing, complimentary accounts of the students they represent, I am at a loss how to make my letter stand out enough to do Serge real justice. You will be able to see by his record that he is an outstanding student, in every way truly gifted intellectually. I am unsure what I might add to that record, but I'll do my best. Let me touch briefly on what I see as Serge's greatest assets, what I see as one of his few weaknesses, and an example of his intellectual caliber.

As to Serge's strengths, they are many, but the sheer power and clarity of his mind is probably the greatest among his many qualifications. I am in my thirtieth year of teaching, and Serge may be one of the half dozen most intellectually gifted students I've ever taught. Probably most people's initial assessment would see Serge as a mathematical and scientific ace, but I teach him currently in AP Literature, and taught him last year in AP Language and Composition, and in both courses he was at the top of the class. His writing is not stylistically innovative, but it's amazingly mature both in terms of his command of mechanics and in terms of his understanding of the issues. As you'll see in his record, he got a five on the AP Language exam last May, and so far this year it looks like he's a shoo-in for a five on the AP Literature exam this coming May. I am hesitant to use a heavily loaded term like "genius," but Serge way well qualify. For real.

As to weaknesses. Unfortunately, like many people of his caliber, Serge can be intellectually arrogant. With stronger teachers he will form a tight bond of admiration and (probably mutual) respect. But he has no tolerance at all for weaker teachers who cannot command his respect. In his tenth grade year he was seriously considering circulating a petition to have his then English teacher dismissed. In many was she was (despite some strengths) not the best teacher for Serge, but he did not show a willingness to work with her and support her, as he well could have. And in class he can sometimes dominate class discussions. Still, I think these are areas of emotional maturity that he may be as of yet too young to have accomplished. I'd like to hope that there would eventually emerge a compassion and a love of humanity the equal of his intellectual gifts.

I recall last year after we had read an essay by Barbara Lawrence called "Four-Letter Words Can Hurt You," Serge and I had a spirited exchange of essays, completely aside from schoolwork, on the topic of the intrinsic badness of certain four-letter words, especially the "f-bomb." I maintained, and still do maintain, that this word is a bad word because of what it means, because that meaning is base and evil. Serge, the young moral relativist, held to the position that words are only bad because our "thinking makes them so," to steal Hamlet's words. Which of us is "right" is not the point of my illustration. The point is that a student, on a strictly volunteer basis, took up the project of arguing with his teacher in a very well reasoned way. Serge probably wrote at least three essays in response to my own—or, rather, we wrote in response to each other. We argued the fine points of meanings, took up or took issue with the dictionary, debated the whole concept of "intrinsic" meaning, and for Serge's part, he did so in fluid prose that soundly argued a well-reasoned thesis. At the end of the day I think his position is mistaken, but how many students would step up like that to an intellectual challenge?

All in all, I cannot recommend Serge Liukin too highly. If a college education will instill in him the sense of humanity to match his brilliance, we will have a major contributor on the world stage.

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No basis		Below average	Average	Good (above average)	Very Good (well above average)	Excellent (top 10%)	Outstanding (top 5%)	One of the top few I've encountered in my career. (top 1%)
	Academic achievement							X
	Intellectual promise							X+
	Quality of writing							X
	Creative, original thought						X	
	Productive class discussion			X				
	Respect accorded by faculty						X	
	Disciplined work habits						X	
	Maturity				X			
	Motivation							X
	Leadership		X					
	Integrity		X					X
	Reaction to setbacks		X					
	Concern for others		X					
	Self-confidence							X
	Initiative, independence							X
	OVERALL						X	

Additional materials

Three letters of recommendation (two from math professors/mentors), math research paper.

Faculty Evaluation

A blue-chipper. The paper he submits is terrific. One of his recommenders calls it "publishable in a serious journal...could be part of a Ph.D. thesis"—and this is by MIT standards, and the recommender is typically very restrained. Mathematically, I haven't seen many folders stronger than this. I'd put him at the same level as the two others I reviewed above, which is to say exceptional.

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Alumni Interview Report

Academic (1)
Genuine scholar, Summa potential, top grades, high 700 and 800 scores combined with evidence of original scholarship

Love of Learning—'outstanding'
Intellectual Curiosity—'outstanding'
Intellectual Originality—'outstanding'

Serge is doing original work in theoretical mathematics about the behavior of molecules in non-compressable liquids being forced through a little opening. It is an extension of an equation which predicts the behavior of fluids in such a situation but not at the molecular level. He spent six weeks at MIT working on this problem. He looks forward to a career in academia. I am not competent enough to judge the legitimacy of his work, but I'm 99% sure he wasn't trying to snow me under. He's into some really esoteric stuff!!

Extracurricular, Athletic, Community, Employment, Family Commitments (4+)
Some but not extensive participation

Serge plays violin in the school concert band. (His school is too small for both a band and an orchestra.) He was the sole violin when he joined the band. This year there are four violins. Serge has played interscholastic tennis, both singles and doubles. He's undecided whether he will play this year.

Personal Qualities (2+)
Rare personal appeal and character

Openness to new ideas and new people—'outstanding
Contribution to college life—'outstanding
What kind of roommate would this student be?—'truly unusual

Our hour together was relaxed and comfortable. Serge is articulate and thoughtful. His mathematics, of course, blew me away. So I asked him about other subjects. He talked about a report he did on the French Revolution. "I found it fascinating to consider that point when the revolution devolved from idealism into terror," he said. He struck me as down-to-earth and easy to talk to. His curiosity (and passion) for mathematics evoked my question , "Is your love of mathematics a search for truth with a capital "T?" He said, "I think it's truth of some kind, but it's certainly not going to answer all the questions of my life. I see mathematics as the 'art of science.'" A person could get into some very interesting conversations with Serge.

Overall (1)
Absolutely superior for admissions; truly unusual in the entire applicant pool

Easy flow of conversation

Serge is probably a mathematics genius. He took calculus in 10th grade and has worked with a math professor for the past two years. (I had a classmate who was truly a math genius, but he was a little odd.) Serge is very ordinary, in a good way. He's not a nerd. He is not pretentious. I think he'd be a terrific addition to the class of 2013!

Liukin 9

Thomas Smith

School: Roseville Senior High School
Description: public school on the East Coast; 95% of graduates attend four-year colleges; many AP courses offered
Ethnicity: Caucasian

Mother: Sales Representative
College: State university (BA, MA)

Father: Unemployed
College: Private four-year college; JD at private university

Siblings: Aaron (16), Michael (14)

Tentative field of study: Social Studies
Commitment: 3 (1-5 scale: 1, absolutely certain; 5, undecided)
Intended occupation: Law
Commitment: 4 (1-5 scale: 1, absolutely certain; 5, undecided)
College activities: Political Groups, Writing/LitMag
Commitment: 2 (1-5 scale: 1, absolutely certain; 5, undecided)

Class rank: 95%/318
SAT I: 750/700/800
SAT II: 800 U.S. History 720 Math 1 740 Physics

Extracurricular Activities:
Political Digest (9-12)
2 hrs/week
Secretary, Publisher
Model Congress (10-12)
1 hr/week
Gavel Award
Presidential Candidate at Princeton Model Congress
Student Government (9-12)
3 hrs/week
President of Roseville High School Student Council
President of Senior Class
Previously VP of Freshman, Sophomore, Junior classes
Myclassguides.com – a business Thomas started to provide study guides for AP exams
Crisis Center Volunteer (11-12)
4 hrs/week
Counselor's Assistant
B'nai B'rith Youth Organization, Roseville Chapter (10-11)
2 hrs/week
VP for Programming

Athletics:
None

Employment:
Summer (~ 35-50 hrs/week)
Term time: Myclassguides.com

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Academic Honors:
NMSF
National Honor Society
AP Scholar with Honors
NCTE
George Washington Book Award
HOBY

Advanced Placement Test Results:

US History	5
European History	5
Eng Lang & Comp	5
Physics B	5

Summer Activities
Work (Jefferson County Democratic Committee and Board of Elections)
Care-Taker at Greenway Country Day School
Seeds of Peace International Camp (2007)

Activities (most meaningful)

I always prefer to work at the Crisis Center at night. My duties are relaxed, and by 10pm most of the hotline pranksters have either moved on to more productive activities or simply tired themselves out. Our privacy policy disallows Assistants from hearing the voices of our clients, so, in my quiet contemplation, my mind pictures the callers speaking to the Counselors around me. The mother beaten by her husband; the teenager terrified to reveal his sexuality; the couch-surfing, transient 20-something unable to hold a job or a home. No longer is it the story in the newspaper or item in the police blotter: these strangers are only a circuit breaker away. We never learn the fates of our callers, and that scares me a little. But I am satisfied that we actually did improve somebody's life, if even for but one phone call.

Personal Statement

"I'm going to kill you."

It struck me that that in the depths of a human faced with unbearable frustration, in our case heated and ceaseless debate over the virtues and terrors of suicide bombing, there germinates the completely irrational, the unimaginably absurd. My friend, the tall and brooding Palestinian teenager with whom previously I had only shared *Bamba* and laughter, had come to see that his logic was completely lost on me, his cause unlovable, and his beliefs rebuffed. In a moment his own intimate understanding of the world and its workings became completely and utterly distorted by realization; it was as if he walked into a house of mirrors, looked at the caricatured and deformed figures projected on the walls all around, and then discovered that the images in the mirrors were in fact reality and all his previous self-conceptualizations were nothing more than naiveté. He was threatened, and out of fear his defense was to strike fear into his opposition. My world and his world were not one; his was unacceptable to me, and mine was simply incomprehensible to him.

My view was and is simple: I rejected categorically killing of any kind. I rejected the deaths caused by IDF soldiers, scared and tired after an eight-hour bungled security operation, numbed and foolish enough to shoot at a threatening mob. I also rejected those caused by the soldiers of the *Intifadah*, longing to exert some type of force on the static events around them, who blew themselves up in the middle of crowded markets. Whereas the Israelis and the Palestinians saw two different armies shrouded in two different ideologies, two methods of warfare, fighting for two different gods, protecting two very separate peoples, I saw two armies staffed with and employing the very same weapons:

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human labor. I could not at the time conceptualize that there were two groups of human beings so engorged in hatred of the other, especially when the two had similar-sounding names, common tastes in music and entertainment, and comparable value systems favoring the family and strong personal codes of honor. Did they not realize that the land they were fighting for was worthless without the great energies and potential stored within both its very inhabitants? Logic is difficult to find in a swirling sea of emotion.

I told Mohammad that the Israeli soldier who killed the young, praying Muslim girl was just as heinous and wretched as the terrorist who looked into a video camera, told his countrymen he was fulfilling their desires, and then proceeded to walk onto a bus filled with Israeli families wearing a belt of explosives tied to his waist.

Mohammad was not a humanist as I was for he did not have a love of man but rather a love for a certain kind of man, that fashioned from the blood of his very descendents, who spoke his unique language, and who suffered only as he had known suffering. *I'm going to kill you*, he said, omitting what gave the sentence its true significance and to me the key to every struggle between peoples on this planet, *in order so that I do not have to question myself.*

My tenure at the Seeds of Peace Camp was not just an experiment in living communally with factions of children whose governments were, for all intents and purposes, in a state of undeclared war with one another. It was also a period of time during which I threatened all conceptions I had previously harbored toward the formation of feelings, personalities, worldviews, and friendships. Epic treatises on existence have been written about lesser instances of knowledge than I purchased over those four weeks of glorious summer; novels of hundreds of pages would not even be capable of expressing the range of emotions I contended with; no pool of verbosity or well of poetic reticence would do my experience justice either. Yet I learned something fundamental in those wooded hollows that forever changed me.

I had come to realize there is no greater scar across the face of our humanity than that of national sovereignty. It is the force that breeds nationalism, and the wars of attrition and other crimes that ensue when an oversimplified and blinded love of country is allowed to dominate reason; it is a vision of the world as irreparably fragmented and disjointed, with tribe, language, common and uncommon history, and successive victories and defeats creating boundaries in no absolute sense except that which, ultimately, we are incapable of denying: by the order and decree of our state.

My three weeks as a charlatan diplomat acquainted me with the realities of living in a world of nation-states rather than that of simply people. We subscribe to a mentality where happenstance of birthplace shades perception of character and worth. The steadfastly green woods of Maine were an asylum in which I heard many voices: that of Dana the Israeli, father a chief in one of the security services, groping to justify the "protective" acts of her nation against those threatening it; or of Noor the Palestinian refugee from Jenin, brother killed by Jewish soldiers because of extremist ties, yelling so loud that that there almost seemed to be a bridge between her emotion and her logic; or of Nayef the Arab-Israeli, father killed while in the service of the IDF, whose summer culminated in a speech of sobs and tears that captured every enmity, every drop of bitterness, and every intricacy of identity woven into the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. Each voice held a new and unique pain, and yet each ignored the others because conventionalism had taught them that suffering could be monopolized behind borders.

I have hope, though that this new century may hold more promise for peace than the millennia preceding it because the realities of the world are shifting. New forces are coming

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to bear on the relationships between nations – globalization, foreign investment, instantaneous and uninhibited links of communication, migrations of workers – binding them together yet tearing apart the status quo. A *tabula rasa* is before us, and it will be the task of a new generation of statesmen, businessmen, technologists, and dreamers to construct the global institutions – whether they be politically, economically, or socially focused – that will have the clout and ability to leverage change, negotiate peace, unite disparate peoples, fight poverty, combat hunger, sustain and conserve our natural resources, and adapt to the changing needs of a maturing world. The basic governmental unit of the nation-state will not be eradicated in my time or at any time in the near future, but the repression of enmities amongst peoples is increasingly necessary for any single country to secure its success in our new, interwoven order of the world. Out of the requirement to co-operate grows promise of progress toward collective amicability.

"I'm going to love you, regardless", I wish I had told Mohammad, but I was a victim of those human emotions called anger and pride. Our nations, those growing, adapting, vibrant things they are, are susceptible to allowing those same base feelings to infect their policies and priorities. In turn, citizens begin to move beyond simply supporting their own country and begin to actively seek the destruction and weakening of others. But, with the advances in communications and growing international economic ties, it is possible that those reactionary channels will come with an increasingly steep price. Peace may very well be within reach if there is a united enough front seeking its promotion. Following my experiences at Seeds camp I am committed to no other end.

Supplement

Myclassguides.com was a website I founded last year as a business that combined my passion for technology with the content I have produced for two of my school classes. Course textbooks in these subjects were synthesized into original chapter outlines that proved to be a supplement to class materials and an important aid in preparation for the year-end AP Examinations.

Looking for a way to capitalize on the hours I had spent creating meticulous outlines of course textbook material, it was important that my work be used to benefit both my fellow students and myself at the same time. Myclassguides provided both a means of providing personal income while at the same time acting as an impetus for the 5's I have received on the AP exams. My classmates were thankful for the study aids and review materials as well. The site is publicly available because the content is supported by advertising sales and referrals.

Founded in November of 2007, the site has posed significant challenges in the form of webpage design, content creation, and revenue production. It has been a rewarding experience learning to overcome these difficulties while refusing to sacrifice the integrity of the content provided and the quality of the visitor experience to the site.

Secondary School Report

It is truly my pleasure to write this letter of recommendation on behalf of Thomas Smith. As his school counselor, I have had the privilege of witnessing his growth into the confident, engaging and exceptional young man he is today. He possesses determination, self-discipline, intellectual inquisitiveness and genuine human concern far superior to that of

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his peers. I have most admired his remarkable ability to excel in all that he does in spite of extraordinarily difficult family circumstances he manages as the oldest child, day after day.

Academically, Thomas will have completed the most rigorous course of study possible at this high achieving high school. His transcript is flawless boasting several AP courses, all 5's on his AP exams, impressive standardized test scores and a near perfect GPA, upon graduation. Even more notable is that Thomas attained all of his success without any outside tutoring or assistance; his accomplishments are the direct result of his tenacity. He is a member of numerous Honor Societies, a national merit scholar semi finalist, an AP scholar with distinction and has been repeatedly selected to attend several different leadership conferences, including the HOBY conference which only allows every school to select one candidate. The truth is Thomas's innate drive for knowledge is not limited to the A+, but to learn for the sake of understanding. He has no interest in memorizing material as he prefers the benefit to understanding how and why things happen. Moreover, he earned both the silver and bronze medal for the National Latin Exam Competition, won third place in National History Day Research Competition, has published poetry and countless other academic accomplishments. The truth is, Thomas has never needed formal instruction to grasp new material; in fact, many of his teachers rely on his initiation of classroom discussions to enhance their daily lessons. As founder of Myclassguides.com, he has published course outlines of textbook materials for the extremely rigorous AP social studies courses aimed at assisting students currently enrolled. Thomas's soft-spoken demeanor and tolerant disposition often lead his peers to actively seek his feedback and guidance on their projects and assignments. It is Thomas's constant thirst for knowledge that has earned him the respect and admiration of all of his teachers and his peers.

Passionate about politics, he hopes for a career in law and/or as a Public Policy Expert. While his peers thrive on Hollywood gossip and sports seasons, Thomas's sustenance comes from the commentary pages of the New York Times, the anchors of MSNBC and the pen bloggers across the Net. In school Thomas has utilized his natural leadership ability to implement his passion as a way of enhancing some of our schools organizations. Earning himself an official position in the Political Science Club since ninth grade, he has solicited volunteers to work with him at phone banks for the Presidential campaign in support of Hillary Clinton, encouraged support for other local campaigns, organized field trips to the National Model United Nations Conference and created the first ever politically-centered newspaper of our high school. Even more impressive are his political experiences outside of school. A Democratic IT Assistant, an intern for the Jefferson County Democratic Committee, a volunteer for the Clinton and Edwards presidential campaigns, a staffer at several fundraisers and committed to assisting at phone banks whenever he is asked, his unwavering energy and political enthusiasm is tireless.

Academic and political success is only a fraction of who Thomas is. Incessantly seeking out other enriching experiences in a multitude of areas, Thomas will truly leave an indelible mark on our high school. A natural born leader, he has been elected as President of his class by his peers each year since ninth grade. While most class presidents campaign for increased driving privileges or open campus, Thomas, in typical Thomas fashion, has chosen to take on much broader concerns in an effort to bring the entire school community together, faculty, administrators and students collectively. This year he has founded a forum in which representatives from the teacher's union and from the senior class work together to enhance the social and academic environment of our school. In addition, as the President of our Student Council, he has plans to commit resources toward educating his peers on not only the law, but particularly their rights and responsibilities as students. Moreover, he is a

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committed member of the debate club, Latin club and has earned himself the Gavel award at Princeton's Model Congress and Honorable Mention at UPenn's Model Congress.

One of the most sensitive, selfless and compassionate students I have had the pleasure of working with, Thomas has spent countless hours and summers working with those far less fortunate then he has been. Whether he is traveling to rebuild homes in New Orleans, volunteering as a Counselor Assistant at the Crisis Center or acting as Chairman or Vice-President for B'nai Brith Youth Organization, his contributions are endless. Most impressive is Thomas's experience as a SEED. Selected to attend the Seeds of Peace International Camp, he had the invaluable experience of spending quality time with other students from the US, Israel and the Middle East. The goal is to create a safe environment for these kids to share their world views with one another in the hope of finding common ground. The students who attend these programs are often the leaders in their communities as with Thomas. While the experience was significant, it is the relationships that are formed that seam to be vital. As these generations mature, the hope is that many of the SEEDS will become prominent world leaders, whether politically, economically or socially, and be able to rekindle what they have learned from one another over the years, in turn vying for world peace. This opportunity is truly the essence of who Thomas is.

I would be remiss if I did not discuss Thomas's notable ability to persevere through enormous family hardships. In this economically fortunate community, Thomas's family has endured a tumultuous divorce between his parents fueled by terrible financial distress. For years, Thomas, the oldest of three boys, has been shuffled between parents, grandparents, aunts and uncles. He has been dragged to court more times then he can count and has a court appointed legal guardian who represents him and his brothers in court. It is not uncommon for him to be home and have the lights turned off or the bank show up to foreclose, forcing another move. The only stability Thomas knew were his grandparents and sadly his grandfather died last year and recently his grandmother has been ill. Thomas and I often discuss his home life and I am always amazed at how mature and adult like he is at being able to put things in perspective. Thomas and his brothers are truly surviors, everything he has attained, he has done on his own through applying for scholarships for summer programs or just investigating the resources that are available to him.

Thomas Smith has already accomplished more then most people twice his age. He has the rare ability to inspire those around him and I sincerely appreciate his generous spirit and personal warmth. He never presents as too overwhelmed and is always approachable and well-mannered. Thomas is a true gentleman in every sense of the word. He shows a level of honesty, initiative and intelligence I so rarely see amongst seventeen year olds. His integrity is unquestionable, his drive is unbelievable and his promise is unlimited. On a personal note, I will truly miss Thomas next year though I look forward to witnessing his abilities thrive as he enters the next phase of his life. He genuinely deserves this next step in his education! Thomas has earned my highest recommendation to your University and I guarantee, if accepted, he will be one of your most prominent superstars.

Roseville High School Transcript

Grade 9		**Grade 10**	
English I	A+	AP European	A+
Global History I	A+	Chemistry A	A+
Living Environment A	A+	College Prep Writing	A+

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Math A Pt3A	A+	English II	A+
Math B Pt1A	A+	Latin II	A+
Spanish II A	A+	Math B Pts2&3A	A+
		Soc Sci Research 10	A+
		Spanish III A	A+

Grade 11		**Grade 12**
AP Composition	A+	AP Calculus BC
AP Physics	A+	AP Latin
AP US Hist & Gov	A+	AP Literature
Latin III	A	AP Physics C
Pre Calc Research	A	AP US Government
Prin. Macro Econ	A	Adv. Spanish Conv.
Soc Sci Research 11	A+	Soc Sci Research 12
Spanish IV A	A+	

Teacher Recommendation 1

I have known Thomas Smith for two years, and am honored to write his recommendation. He was a student of mine in 10th grade English, 10th grade College Preparation Writing, and 11th grade Advanced Placement English Language and Composition. These were highly demanding, rigorously structured English courses, and Thomas excelled in all three. In AP, Thomas was only one of a handful of students to earn an "A+" as a final course grade, and his "5" on the AP exam was testament to his writing skills. Just a week ago, Thomas received the Certificate of Superior Writing in the 2008 National Council of Teachers of English Annual Writing Contest, one of 525 juniors in the nation (1,789 students entered the competition) to receive this award.

I remember reading Thomas's writing as a sophomore in September 2007, and knowing that I was reading the words of an extraordinarily talented writer. But what makes a good writer? Not only the skill, but the mind as well, and the passion and drive, the interest in events outside of your immediate world. This quality in a teenager is rare indeed. In his junior year, Thomas and a group traveled to New Hampshire to witness Hillary Clinton's campaign. Thomas's essay on his experience was a beautiful piece – an astonishing piece – that could easily have been published in *The New York Times*. This is true. He also has a wit that is unmatched. For his Description of Place essay, his topic was "inside the Head of an English Teacher." In my 15 years as an English Teacher, I can easily say that he is one of the top three writers I have seen, not just in my class, but in all the AP classes here.

Thomas is an incredibly motivated student, juggling a rigorous academic schedule with extracurriculars, jobs, and three Honor Societies. He is bright, an excellent writer, a true leader, and is respected by both his peers and the faculty; Thomas has a fine sense of humor, and has great continuing potential for growth. Thomas has the necessary qualifications – intelligence, ambition, compassion, and integrity – to become an asset to your school. *Thomas is a doer, one who will energize your campus!* I will truly miss Thomas. Our high school is better because of him. Therefore, I recommend Thomas Smith without reservation. If I can be of further assistance, please let me know.

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No basis		Below average	Average	Good (above average)	Very Good (well above average)	Excellent (top 10%)	Outstanding (top 5%)	One of the top few I've encountered in my career. (top 1%)
	Academic achievement							X
	Academic Potential							X
	Character/ Personal Qualities							X
	Overall Rating							X

Teacher Recommendation 2

It is indeed an honor to write this letter on behalf of Thomas Smith. I have known him for three years in my capacity as a teacher and club advisor at Roseville High School. Without question, Thomas Smith is among the best students that I have had the pleasure to teach in a career that spans twenty years. He is truly an outstanding student of history and politics and is an actively engaged young man who has great aspirations. He is intelligent, confident, and keenly interested in challenging himself to be the best that he can be.

While I had known Thomas since the tenth grade, it was during his junior year as a member of my Advanced Placement United States History class that I was first able to interact with him on a daily basis. What I witnessed was remarkable. From the outset Thomas demonstrated a knowledge and interest in history and politics that put him head and shoulders above most of the other students. He consistently asked insightful questions and wrote clear, concise, and thoughtful essays. Thomas clearly went above and beyond the expectations of the course; in fact he began is own history website (Myclassguides.com) in which he outlined entire chapters in our text. This effort not only showed great diligence but entrepreneurship as well. Many of his colleagues found the site of great use in preparing for exams throughout the year. There was little doubt that Thomas would score well on the AP exam. In fact I used his essays more than once as a model to show how a particular question should be addressed. For his efforts Thomas received recognition for his scholarship. Beyond the classroom, I have had the opportunity to watch Thomas at several Model Congresses. Once again Thomas showed a command of the content and a willingness to participate and share ideas. Additionally, in the past year Thomas has gained a great wealth of experience by actively campaigning during the recent primary season.

Aside form his academic attributes, Thomas Smith is fully immersed in our school community. He is currently the president of the senior class and has been active in school government since the ninth grade. He gives freely of his time to a variety of extracurricular organizations many of which help those that are less fortunate. He has traveled to New Orleans as a volunteer and attended the Seeds of Peace International Camp. Yet while Thomas has earned many honors, he remains humble. He is a well adjusted "down to earth" young man who is easy to know and talk to. He is well respected by his teachers and his peers and is looking forward to the challenges that lie ahead.

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No basis		Below average	Average	Good (above average)	Very Good (well above average)	Excellent (top 10%)	Outstanding (top 5%)	One of the top few I've encountered in my career. (top 1%)
	Academic achievement							X
	Academic Potential							X
	Character/ Personal Qualities							X
	Overall Rating							X

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Thomas Smith—Alumni Interview Report

Academic (2+)
Excellent grades and low to mid 700 scores
Intellectual Curiosity – 'outstanding'

Thomas has seen the "famous kids" and he is not afraid. He has the capacity to compete on the next level and he will enjoy every minute. He wants to go to law school but not to practice law. He knows he's going somewhere; he's just not sure where.

Extracurricular, Athletic, Community, Employment, Family Commitments (3+)
Above average activity or participation

Thomas is very political and politically active both personally and volunteering for state and national campaigns. Although some of his volunteer activities appear to be mechanical, his commitment to politics is indisputable.

Personal Qualities (3+)
Above average appeal and character
Openness to new ideas and new people – 'outstanding'
Contribution to college life – 'outstanding'

The adjectives that come to mine when I reflect on my conversation with Thomas are: aggressive, resourceful, self-confident and astute. When his petition to get his name on the ballot for School President failed, he won Class President. Thomas turned his camp experience into a research paper on Civil Liberties by conducting an international survey. Thomas is so proud of his AP 5's he has a website to help others do the same. And finally, Thomas believes he has found a new source of income – trading stocks.

Overall (3+)
Strong candidate
Easy flow of conversation

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Melissa Guzman De Jesus

School: Cold Creek High School
Description: Suburban regional high school on the East Coast; 40% of graduates attend four-year colleges; several AP courses offered
Ethnicity: Hispanic; U.S. Permanent Resident (also citizen of the Dominican Republic)

Mother: Homemaker	**Father:** Unemployed	**Legal Guardian:** Aunt
College: None	**College:** None	**College:** Dental tech. training

Siblings: Juan (16), Anthony (14), Pablo (13), Maribel (12), Alex (8), Michael (8), Eric (11), Anthony (4), Susana (2)

Tentative field of study: Humanities
Commitment: 2 (1-5 scale: 1, absolutely certain; 5, undecided)
Intended occupation: Medicine
Commitment: 1 (1-5 scale: 1, absolutely certain; 5, undecided)
College activities: Ethnic groups, volleyball
Commitment: 2 (1-5 scale: 1, absolutely certain; 5, undecided)

Class rank: 1/583
SAT I: 670/700/680
SAT II: 800 Spanish 740 World History 640 French Listening

Extracurricular Activities:
Rise up youth ministries (9-12)
6 hrs/week
Founder
State park ground crew volunteer (9-12)
5 hrs/week
Activities aide
Future Business Leaders of America (9-12)
6 hrs/week
School president
Interact Club (11-12)
Hispanic-American Club (9-12)
Student Council (10-12)
French Club (9-12)
President

Athletics:
None

Employment:
Summer (20-45 hrs/week)

Academic Honors:
Varsity Scholar
National Honor Society
AP Scholar with Distinction
National Hispanic Scholar
Principal High Honors

Advanced Placement Test Results:

US History	5
Biology	4
Eng Lang & Comp	4
World History	5
Psychology	5

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Summer Activities

Work (hostess)
Volunteer
State park recreation program guide

Short essay (most meaningful activity)

Working with troubled inner-city youth has turned into my passion. I first became aware of the effects of drugs when a childhood friend died of a cocaine overdose at age twelve. Witnessing how my friends slowly succumbed to the unforgiving underworld of sex, drugs and "easy" cash compelled me to take action and reject the role of an oblivious bystander.

Rise Up Youth Ministries is a church-based, youth-run organization formed with the purpose of ministering to the needs of the rejected teenage community of my town. We present teen mothers, gangbangers, illegal immigrants, prostitutes and drug addicts with the gift of friendship, love, and family. R.U.Y.M. calls young adults to arise from the state of slumber that is slowly poisoning our society and work together to provide troubled youth with the opportunity to embark on the difficult journey towards a rewarding life.

Personal Statement

While living in crimelands like Miami, Fl and Santo Dominigo, DR, falling asleep to the sound of street fights and reminding myself to avoid eye-contact with Alberto, the perverted town junkie, were everyday things. In 2002, my family decided to move up north and leave Florida behind. We settled here hoping to find a place where the schools did not send a five-page, double-sided list of registered sex offenders living two doors down. We wanted sweeter neighbors. Adjusting to a life where I was often the only colored child in rooms flooded with cheery white faces, was not easy, but it was a much-needed start. I never fathomed getting asked to go surfing before tourists started crowding the beach, "hanging out" in front of Wawa, or riding a bike to "Auntie M's" (Mary's Pizza). I did not have the slightest clue what they were talking about. Auntie M's? Wawa? My life consisted of hooking up with the girls after-school and getting a slurpee at 7-Eleven if we managed to find enough change to buy one we could all share. Riding a bike outside was only recommended if you wanted to get shot, and surfing was something you did if you were white. Point blank, that is how things were supposed to be and nothing was going to change me. I soon realized "hooking up" referred to something totally different from what I meant and "point blank" did not help make my argument any more clearer.

I, slowly, acknowledged that God was bestowing me with the gift of embarking on a journey that would take me somewhere special. An opportunity to take on the challenge of becoming somebody and leaving my old antics in the past. Though hesitant, I embraced this chance and I regained my faith in the Lord for I knew that He was preparing me to combat the vile institution that had bereaved so many people of their loved ones, that hellish world known as "the life." I thought pre-teen pregnancies were only a problem in Florida, until one of my best friends confided to me that she had had eight abortions done before the age of thirteen; her mother was not even aware her daughter was not a virgin. After hearing more stories like hers, I was convinced that this was a national problem—and should be treated like one. I am exhausted by how people look the other way upon encountering a

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child in despair, rejected by her/his family, and involved in a life that could only end in tragedy. Thirteen-year old prostitutes, ten-year old gangbangers, and twelve-year old drug addicts do not constitute an issue only pertinent to a city, a race, or a "bad" family. The degradation of society's young ones should be the nation's concern, for it is everyone's future that lies in peril when tomorrow's adults decided to drop out of school because selling their bodies for two or three hundred dollars appears more rewarding.

With much help from my family and friends, in 2005, I was able to found a youth-run organization that would minister to the emotional and physical needs of the forgotten teenage community where we live. Rise Up Youth Ministries is kept alive by the determination of an elite group of adolescents that share a desire to help others in their community. We make it our mission to befriend those that society has ignored and show them that a brighter future lies in deciding to abandon a life of crime. These lost souls are capable of becoming brilliant individuals given the right resources and teaching them could not be any more gratifying. We involve them in drama clubs, worship teams, and give them responsibilities, for they are valuable members of society and should be treated as leaders-in-training. Helping others realize that there is more to life has been an extremely rewarding experience and I can only imagine the magnificent work that could be done if more people joined the fight against "the life." One can do the greatest good when showing others their own potential to be great. The wealth, power, or fame we have in this lifetime are gone once we expire, but the work we have done towards the benefit of mankind has a chance of being immortal. As Anthony Robbins once said, "Life is a gift, and it offers us the privilege, opportunity, and responsibility to give something back by becoming more."

Secondary School Report

Melissa Guzman is the perfect fit for Harvard College and it is with great pleasure that I enthusiastically recommend her for acceptance into your freshman class.

Melissa's academic record is proof enough that she is very mature and able to handle a great deal of responsibility. Over the course of her high school journey, Melissa has taken some of our most demanding classes such as Advanced Placement Biology and Advanced Placement World History. That is especially true this year as Melissa is currently taking Advanced Placement English and Calculus. Melissa has a grade point average of 105 on a 100 scale, which is the highest GPA of her graduating class. She is ranked number 1 out of 607 students. It is quite an accomplishment.

In addition, please note that although Melissa is enrolled in Honors French 4 she is also voluntarily staying after school to be tutored in Advanced Placement French 5. Unfortunately, Melissa was unable to take AP French 5 for credit; however, the Foreign Language Supervisor tells me she is by far the best French student she has ever seen. It is Melissa's intention to take the Advanced Placement French Exam in May.

Melissa is an exceptional young lady both academically and socially. Melissa has been an active participant in our school's internationally recognized Key Club Organization, the Hispanic-American Club, Class Council, and so many more. Melissa also spends a lot of time volunteering with her church and church sponsored activities. She is a Youth Advisor and Drama Club Director, and also the Director of the Sabbath School. Melissa takes on many responsibilities. The difference is, when Melissa commits herself to something she always follows through. This only further demonstrates what an asset she would make at your institution.

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Melissa is such a strong, motivated, intelligent young woman who by far has earned the respect of both her peers and administration. She is a student who has the potential to accomplish her wildest dreams. I have no doubt that she will do just that. It is because of these reasons that I again recommend Melissa with great enthusiasm. By accepting Melissa into your freshman class, you will be allowing her the opportunity to become that much closer to achieving all of her lifelong dreams. I know she will make you as proud as he has made me.

Cold Creek High School Transcript

Grade 9		**Grade 10**	
HN English	94	HN English	94
CP Comp Workpl Read	97	CP French 2	97
CP French I	98	HN Algebra 2	96
HN Geometry	92	HN Chemistry	97
HN Biology	94	AP World History	98
HN World Cult/Wrld Hist	96	HN US Hist I	95

Grade 11		**Grade 12**	
AP Biology	95	AP Calculus 1	90
AP Eng 3, Lang & Comp	95	HN French 4	100
AP Psychology	98	HN Physics	94
AP US History 2	96	AP English 4	94
HN French 3	95	AP European History	93
HN Pre-Calculus	100		

Teacher Recommendation 1

It is with confidence that I recommend Melissa Guzman for acceptance into your fine institution. I had the pleasure of having Melissa in my Advanced Placement Psychology class in her junior year. Melissa is a young woman with exceptional ability. Her test scores and class average were among the highest I have seen. In addition to her outstanding academic performance, Meli was an active member of the class. She consistently contributed perceptive comments and welcomed constructive criticism. During group activities, Meli would willingly accept the leadership role and she was well respected by her peers. She demonstrates an intuitive grasp of human nature yet is humble and unassuming. Meli is truly one of the most exceptional students I have encountered and I am certain she has a promising future.

In addition to her outstanding academic performance, Melissa is an active member of some of Cold Creek's finest clubs. She has assumed leadership roles in the Hispanic-American Club, Student Council and the Future Business Leaders of America. The fact that she was a team captain of the Academic Challenge Club in her sophomore year is indicative of her ability to combine superior intelligence with leadership skills. She is a strong leader who is organized and thorough. In the community, Meli is an active member of her church and has utilized her mastery of Spanish and English to organize many community events.

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Melissa is a well-rounded and highly motivated student who will make a wonderful addition to your fine institution. Please feel free to contact me if you would like to further discuss Melissa's accomplishments.

No basis		Below average	Average	Good (above average)	Very Good (well above average)	Excellent (top 10%)	Outstanding (top 5%)	One of the top few I've encountered in my career. (top 1%)
	Academic achievement							X
	Intellectual promise							X
	Quality of writing							X
	Creative, original thought							X
	Productive class discussion							X
	Respect accorded by faculty							X
	Disciplined work habits							X
	Maturity							X
	Motivation							X
	Leadership							X
	Integrity							X
	Reaction to setbacks							X
	Concern for others							X
	Self-confidence							X
	Initiative, independence							X
	OVERALL							X

Teacher Recommendation 2

I am a teacher and coach at Cold Creek High School, and have known Meli Guzman for three years of her time here. Meli is currently a student of mine on A.P. Calculus. I have developed a good relationship with Meli over these past three years, and feel confident that I can give you an accurate depiction of both the personal and academic qualities. She is interested in attending your institution.

Meli is self-motivated and very disciplined in her efforts to achieve her goals in the classroom. She is a diligent worker who takes her personal and academic responsibilities seriously. Meli is also a very personable young lady, who makes friends easily, and is well respected among both her teachers and peers.

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Having had the privilege teaching Meli for two years, I have found that she exhibits many of the qualities necessary for success at the college level. Among them are a mature response to constructive criticism, and a willingness to accept difficult challenges. She is a leader who leads by example, and an unselfish individual who gives her time to help others.

Meli is well rounded. She is involved in a number of school sponsored activities as well as community groups. Among these are Student Council, the Hispanic American Club, the Key Club and the Future Business Leaders of America. She is also a member of the Academic Challenge Club, the Interact Club, and the Biology League among others. Meli also gets involved in the community. She participated in several charity drives and has volunteered for multiple activities to help youths in her church.

In the thirty years that I have been teaching and, few names come to mind of individuals who possess the same personal and academic qualities that Meli has. She is truly an outstanding student, and a quality person. Meli Guzman will be a great addition to any college campus, and will help create a positive environment wherever she attends.

It is with great pride, and extreme confidence, that I recommend Meli. Please accept this letter as my highest evaluation, and know that these words represent a sincere and accurate appraisal. Thank you for your consideration in this matter.

No basis		Below average	Average	Good (above average)	Very Good (well above average)	Excellent (top 10%)	Outstanding (top 5%)	One of the top few I've encountered in my career. (top 1%)
	Academic achievement						X	
	Intellectual promise						X	
X	Quality of writing							
	Creative, original thought						X	
	Productive class discussion						X	
	Respect accorded by faculty							X
	Disciplined work habits						X	
	Maturity							X
	Motivation							X
	Leadership							X
	Integrity							
	Reaction to setbacks							X
	Concern for others							
	Self-confidence						X	
	Initiative, independence							X
	OVERALL							X

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Melissa Guzman de Jesus—Alumni Interview Report

Academic (3+)
Good grades and mid 600 to low 700 scores
Love of Learning—'outstanding'
Intellectual Curiosity—'outstanding'
Intellectual Originality—'outstanding'

Extracurricular, Athletic, Community, Employment, Family Commitments (2+)
Local or regional recognition; major accomplishments

Melissa is extremely active in youth outreach activity in association with her church. She developed and pretty much runs a program of counseling and various activities for adolescents in the community who would otherwise be susceptible to gangs and drugs. The group numbers between 30 and 50. Melissa describes it as her way to "relax."

Personal Qualities (1-)
Rare personal appeal and character
Openness to new ideas and new people—'truly unusual'
Contribution to college life—'outstanding'
What kind of roommate would this student be?—'outstanding'

One of the most enjoyable interviews I have ever conducted. If there is such a thing as "the right stuff," Melissa has it to burn.

Overall (2)
Clear Admit; one to recruit
Easy flow of conversation
Diamond in the Rough
See narrative report

Additional Comments

1) If the question is whether Melissa is ready for Harvard, the answer, in my opinion, is an unequivocal yes. I spent an hour and a half with her, and I've rarely enjoyed myself more. This young woman has brains, poise, insightfulness and energy to burn. She has consistently profited from situations that could easily have defeated a less determined person. I think she would make the most of the opportunities Harvard presents. I urge her admission.

2) Melissa has an unusual background, to put it mildly. Melissa has turned this situation, which could have made her bitter and disaffected, into a positive. She is determined to make something of herself, and in the process to help others from falling into the trap she might have otherwise fallen into. She is active in her church, and has developed and runs a sort of "youth ministry," which conducts outreach to kids in the area who are being tempted by drugs and gangs. She is fascinated by how people's minds work—what makes them do what

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they do, and says she wants to be a psychiatrist because "that's how you can really put what you learn about people to work, to help them."

Melissa is not naïve about things. She talked openly about her father, who appears to have lived a sort of rootless existence and who shows up from time to time and tries to re-establish his connection to his daughter. "We try to have a father-daughter relationship," she said. "We do the best we can. It's not perfect, but it's something, and I appreciate that he tries."

Melissa seemed sincere when she said this, and I was impressed by the generosity, and the resilience of character, the statement suggested. At the same time, Melissa realizes that she has been affected by her upbringing. "I suppose that's why I'm so career-oriented now," she said, when I asked how her background had shaped her life. "At least right now, I don't see myself getting married, having a family, having children."

The point of all this is that while she may be a bit rough around the edges, Melissa is quite savvy in the ways of the world. She is well-grounded morally, something she attributes to her grandmother, who raised her, and her commitment to her church. And she is an extremely quick study. I assure you this young woman will have no trouble "adjusting" to Harvard, or of dealing with anything Harvard might throw at her.

3) Melissa seems sincerely committed to making the most of every opportunity she gets. She does not seem afraid of challenge or difficulty. "I want to go to a college with classes that take me out of my comfort zone," she said. A number of her comments during the interview were variations on that theme: "I need a place to grow." "I want something different, something that challenges me."

These may be conventional-sounding sentiments, but Melissa really means them. She discovered the joy of learning later than most "bright" kids do—not until she moved to South Jersey and got into a school that took her seriously. In Miami, she said, she went to a school where the teachers didn't care and where she was expected to fail—"to become pregnant before I turned 15," she said. Only when she moved to here did she encounter adults—outside her family—who recognized her ability and encouraged her to make the most of it. "I started to see that it was worthwhile to learn things," she said. "Once I figured that out, I didn't want to stop."

4) One of the most impressive things about Melissa is that she recognizes how lucky she is, and wants her life to reflect that fact. Melissa is clearly intelligent—she is quick-witted, and has the ability to observe the world around her and think about what she has seen. When I asked her why she wanted to go into psychiatry, she told me about how many of her friends, in both Miami and here, had been diagnosed with personality disorders and simply dosed with drugs rather than counseling and careful attention to their personalities. "That's not right," she said. "It's an easy way out." In other words, she is insightful enough to see that there are moral consequences to the way people do things, as well as to what they do. In my experience, that's not something every 18-year-old can do.

5) Melissa is fun to talk to. She is full of what, in another time, would have been called "spunk." She has confidence in herself and her abilities, and just enough "attitude." She comes across as engaged but not obnoxious; she looks you in the eye and tells you what she thinks about things. "This town is a dump," she said at one point, when she was discussing her youth outreach work there. "You hear 'resorts' and you think it will be this fabulous place, but it's not."

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She can also laugh at herself. She described how her grandmother won't let her get too wrapped up in her aspirations. "She always makes me do the chores, first thing when I come home from school," she said. "She thinks I have to be prepared to be a wife and mother. I'll say I have two papers to do or some college to apply to and she'll say, 'Okay, fine, but first wash the dishes."

6) Melissa is first in her class and has acceptable board scores, but I think the most impressive thing about her, intellectually, is her combination of focus and balance about her studies. She works hard, and makes the most of her ability, but she does not obsess about it. She has an exceptionally mature, workmanlike attitude toward her studies. "If I have a task, I think about it and do it," she said. "I think about what I would expect if someone were doing the work for me, and that's why I try to give my teachers." She viewed some of her more competitive classmates with healthy amusement. "I let them worry," she said. "I just move on through." She demonstrated that characteristic throughout our interview. There was not a topic we discussed—and the topics ranged from the inner city to politics to choral music—which she hadn't thought about and on which she didn't have something interesting to say. She was a good listener, as well—I had the sense (which I don't get with every interviewee) that I was talking to an adult, or at least a "near-adult."

7) In sum, I was very impressed with Melissa. She may be a bit of a risk, but not as much as you might think, and in any event a risk that could pay enormous dividends. She is smart enough, and self-possessed enough, to do well at Harvard, but most of all, she is genuine enough to be there. I recommend her admission.

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Giang Nguyen

School: Washington HS
Description: Large magnet public high school in a major mid-Western city; 85% of graduates attend four-year colleges; many AP courses offered
Ethnicity: Asian American (Vietnamese first language, language primarily spoken at home)

Mother: Manicurist
College: None

Father: Manicurist
College: None

Siblings: Dai (10), Ha (2)

Tentative field of study: Biological Sciences
Commitment: 3 (1-5 scale: 1, absolutely certain; 5, undecided)
Intended occupation: Medicine
Commitment: 2 (1-5 scale: 1, absolutely certain; 5, undecided)
College activities: Vocal music, track/cross-country
Commitment: 4 (1-5 scale: 1, absolutely certain; 5, undecided)

Class rank: 17/1108

ACT: English: 30 Math: 33 Reading: 30 Science: 26 Composite: 30 (Writing: 8/12)
SAT II: 780 Chemistry 740 Math II 770 World History

Extracurricular Activities:
Math competitions (9-12)
Co-captain
4 hours/wk
Chinese Club, Korean Club, Vietnamese Club (9-12)
Treasurer
5 hours/wk
Key Club (10, 11)
Book Club (9)
NHS (11, 12)

Athletics:

Employment:

Academic Honors:
National Honor Society
Washington Scholar

Advanced Placement Test Results:

Eng Lang & Comp	3
AB Calculus	5
Chemistry	5

Summer Activities:
Service learning
Helping uncle with business
Travel to Vietnam

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Short answer (most meaningful activity)

Of all the extracurricular activities I've gotten involved in, I have always liked Math Team best. We meet twice a week, and work on challenging problems from previous competitions. Our coaches would also show us some math tricks, which are very useful. However, it is not only the math problems and competitions that I enjoy, it is the bonds that I have created in the team during these years. I have been in the team for three years now, and went from a member to one of the Captains. It is the place where I have met my best friend, and we are still the best of friends. It is the place where I found a teacher that was "my second mother" in school; she was also my AP Calculus teacher junior year. As nerdy as it sounds, Math Team has created an unforgettable high school memory for me.

Personal Statement

Everyone has that someone in their life that is important to them, but that person might seem irrelevant to others. This someone might be an ordinary person, not worth paying attention to or even mentioning. However, this individual had such a big influence on me and did so much for her family that not even words can be enough to show what a hero she is. This person is my grandmother.

Throughout her life, my grandma never complained about her hardships. When my grandpa died in the Vietnam War, my grandma became a widow only at the age of 30. She was left with seven kids, including my mom, to raise on her own. Living in the countryside, farming was her main source of income which proved not to be enough.

She desperately struggled to find work anywhere and everywhere, leaving the children to take care of themselves or having a neighbor check on them when she was gone. In a matter of a month, she became a farmer, a fisherman, and a merchant. Her typical work day started at two in the morning. Having gathered wood the day before, she made the 20-mile trip to the nearest city to sell it. When the sun rose, she came back home and immediately set out for the ocean. She worked along with the other fishermen earning her share of the catch. Then she would sell the fish at the market. Returning home, she ate her only meal of the day. After finishing her plain meal, my grandma walked down toward her small farmland, where she toiled under the burning sun until evening. At night, she came home to the children, who had been waiting for her all day.

After a few years of hard work, she was able to save up enough money to build a bigger house for her growing children. As my aunts and uncles grew older, most of them moved away and started their own families. Throughout these years, my grandma had to endure the deaths of three of her children. She did not show any weakness. Instead, she continued to raise my youngest uncle and my mom, who were still living with her. Then my mom had me, who was another mouth to feed. When my mother could not find any job in the countryside, she moved to the city to find a job. I was left under the care of my grandma. It was not easy living with her. Sometimes we would skip meals or eat as little as possible, because she was stingy with money. My grandma tried her best to provide me with food, shelter, and an education. I did not even realize this until I left her side, immigrating to the United States.

When my family was allowed to come to America, my grandma lent us the money for paperwork and transportation. When we went around borrowing money to go to America, nobody would trust us, and in the end, it was only my grandma that supported us

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financially until we arrived in America. Therefore, now I am determined to study hard, be successful, and repay her for all that she has done for me and my family. She was my inspiration throughout school. She tells me to dream big dreams and achieve them. However, she has also influenced my personality, making me a more thoughtful and conservative person.

My grandma was always a positive woman, and she looks out for her family's happiness rather than her own. She sacrificed her life and energy to raise the lives of many, including my own. She once said this when I came back to visit her, "You live your life only once. Therefore, make the most of it and study hard now so that in the future you won't regret anything." This has been my motto since then. When I was still living with her, I was not mature enough to know how grateful I should have been. Now, I know that she is one of the most important people in my life.

Secondary School Report

I am pleased to offer this letter of recommendation on behalf of Giang Nguyen. I have known Giang for 4 years as her counselor. She separates herself from the rest of her peers because of her extreme determination and focus. I am confident that she will continue her tradition of hard work and dedication this academic school year and apply it to her post secondary education. Giang's story starts from the rural countryside of Vietnam.

Giang's mother left her to live with her grandmother because there were better opportunities for work in the city during post-Vietnam War society. Giang's grandmother held three different jobs including a fisherman, farmer and merchant. They had little for food, and because of this, Giang quickly learned not to be wasteful. She also learned the value of an education because school is not always free in Vietnam. Giang's family soon decided to move to the United States for better educational opportunities.

Giang quickly learned English and was able to attend Washington. She began to excel in all of her classes and immediately became an "A" student. She loved her Chorus class because she was able to express her love for music. She took Latin for two years where she played fun games that helped her to learn Latin. Math has always been an academic strength for Giang. She has taken the most challenging Math course within our school, which is AP Calculus/Analytical Geometry. This year will also be filled with challenging courses, including both AP Biology and Physics. Giang hopes to eventually major in a Pre-Medical program or Biology and Chemistry. Giang wishes to pursue a career as a Pediatrician because she loves both children and science.

Giang also involves herself within our school environment and in her community. She has been a member of the Math Team, danced during our International Day Festival, and been a member of various ethnic organizations including the Korean, Chinese and Vietnamese Club. She also enjoyed our school's book club her freshman year and has been very active in two of our school's most important service organizations as a member of the National Honors Society and the Key Club. She also enjoys playing badminton, listening to music, and reading excellent novels. She has achieved 102 service learning hours within her community by serving her local park district, tutoring at her elementary school, and volunteering at a local nursing home.

Giang has also won various awards and distinctions with our school. She has won the Perfect Attendance Award during her freshman and junior years here. She has been a Washington Scholar since the end of her sophomore year, which is a distinction only given

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to students whose grade point averages are in the top 50 of their class during any given semester. Giang has also received distinctions for participating in academic competitions such as the Latin Olympics and Math Team.

There are only a few students who I would label as "exceptional" in the areas of service, academics, and overall hard work and dedication to their school environment. I recommend her enthusiastically to your academic institution.

Washington High School Transcript

Grade 9		**Grade 10**	
Survey Lit	A/A	H Amer Lit	A/A
World Studies	A/A	H US Hist	A/A
Biology	A/A	H Chemistry	A/A
Geometry	A/A	Adv Alg/Trg	A/A
Drafting	B/A	H Latin I	A/A
H Comp Info Tech	A/A		

Grade 11		**Grade 12**
AP Eng Lang & Comp	A/A	AP Biology
H Early World Hist	A/A	AP Physics
H Sci Lab Chemistry	A/A	AP Psychology
AP Chemistry	A/A	AP Microeconomics
AP Calc-Analytical	A/A	AP English IV
Latin II	A/A	

Teacher Recommendation 1

It is an honor for me to be writing in support of Giang Nguyen's application. My name is Heather Griffin and I am a history teacher at Washington College High School, which is where I had the privilege of teaching Giang Nguyen.

Over the years I have written dozens of letters of recommendation for students applying to college and for scholarships. I have always believed in their abilities and potential, or I would not have written the letters, but being asked to write this letter was the first time I was afraid that I would not be able to write the letter she deserves. Giang is the ideal student. She is honest, kind, and brilliant. Giang is the most deserving of students and there is no doubt in my mind that she will accomplish great things in her life and it is my sincerest wish to help her in any way I can.

Everyone that knows Giang, teachers and students alike, agree that she is hard working, intelligent, and uniquely patient. Toward the end of the last school year I found myself discussing outstanding students with Ms. Howrigan, the AP chemistry teacher. As the conversation progressed Ms. Howrigan and I realized that the students we were both bragging about and praising were in fact the same student, Giang Nguyen. To our even greater surprise I learned that Ms. Howrigan used Giang's tests the same way I did, to check for mistakes in our answer key. Giang routinely earned perfect test scores, so when Giang missed a question it was worth double-checking the answer key. Sure enough, the first time

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Giang missed a test question, I found out that I had made mistake on the answer key and that Giang had earned another perfect score. In the five years I have been teaching here, Giang is the only student to have inspired this much confidence and trust in her teachers.

I first met Giang in the fall of her junior year when she enrolled in my honors Early World History course. In a school of over 5,000 students it can take some time to get to know all of your students and after a few years it is difficult for teachers to remember all of their former students, but Giang is one student that none of her teachers will forget. Giang earned over 100 percent in my honors Early World History course, in which the average grade was an 85 percent, and she did such an outstanding job on her projects that I saved several to use as examples in future classes. After looking at a copy of her transcript and speaking to other teachers, I know she will be missed by many of the faculty next year.

In addition to being an excellent student, Giang is also a well-rounded individual who is volunteered in a wide variety of activities at Washington. Giang has participated in activities ranging from Math Team and the book club to a number of culture clubs including Chinese Club, Korean Club, and Vietnamese Club. Giang has also demonstrated her concern for the community with her involvement in the Key Club.

For anyone to truly recognize what an amazing young woman Giang is, it is necessary to understand her past and her family as well. Giang was born in rural Vietnam and out of financial necessity, raised primarily by her grandmother while her parents worked in Saigon and Hong Kong to earn money to help support the family. When Giang was nine years old, she was reunited with her parents and shortly there after they moved to the United States. In the years since arriving in the United States, Giang has not only mastered the English language, she has risen to the top of her class at a highly selective school and become the hope of her entire family.

I feel privileged to have met this extraordinary young woman and I recommend her without hesitation. If you have any questions, please call me or email me.

No basis		Below average	Average	Good (above average)	Very Good (well above average)	Excellent (top 10%)	Outstanding (top 5%)	One of the top few I've encountered in my career. (top 1%)
	Academic achievement							X
	Intellectual promise							X
	Quality of writing						X	
	Creative, original thought						X	
	Productive class discussion							X
	Respect accorded by faculty							X
	Disciplined work habits							X
	Maturity							X
	Motivation							X

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	Leadership						X	
	Integrity							X
	Reaction to setbacks							X
	Concern for others							X
	Self-confidence						X	
	Initiative, independence							X
	OVERALL							X

Teacher Recommendation 2

Giang Nguyen is a student at Washington College Prep High School for whom I have had the great pleasure and privilege to know since her freshman year of High School. As her Math Team coach since her freshman year and her AP Calculus teacher last year I am privy to her most recent academic abilities and potential.

Giang clearly displays academic excellence, as shown by her grades. She consistently earned the highest grade out of 50 students in my two AP Calculus classes, and received the highest score one can achieve (5) on the AP test. Ever present, and hard-working, she is a committed and helpful leader or member of any group, team, or club she belongs to. Giang Nguyen is really one of THE BEST math students I have taught in 5 years. I have had conversations with her AP Chemistry teacher (another AP class where she earned a 5) regarding her performance, and she resoundingly concurs with my opinion of Giang as well. While her spoken English is perfect, it is noted that her writing and reading scores are less strong than her other test scores (which are still very high). I expect that has to do with English being her second language, yet I still see her put as much effort into English as math and science, even though it may be more challenging.

Giang is easy to work with and unassuming. I have seen her grow so much as the captain of the math team, and become a true example of leadership—not only with her skill, but also with her demeanor and ability to guide other students through challenging problems. She has participated in and led the math team every year in high school, and also been a part of our International Days festival by participating in a different ethnic group's (Chinese, Korean, and Vietnamese clubs) performance to broaden her exposure to diversity each year. She is never boastful or overly proud of her many accomplishments.

Giang is a lovely young lady to interact with around the school. It is clear to me that she has exceptional natural intelligence, yet it is her outstanding work ethic that I think brings her true academic excellence. She is always searching for the right way to do every problem in math team or Calculus class, and is the type of student who can be shown a technique just once, and then can apply it again on her own in different situations. She learns from her mistakes, and has a desire to improve upon every single one of them. Not only smart, she is also a kind, considerate, and committed student to her friends and teachers alike. You would be well-served to admit this extremely talented student into your class.

No basis		Below average	Average	Good (above average)	Very Good (well above	Excellent (top 10%)	Outstanding (top 5%)	One of the top few I've encountered in my

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					average)			career. (top 1%)
	Academic achievement							X
	Intellectual promise							X
X	Quality of writing							
X	Creative, original thought							
	Productive class discussion							X
	Respect accorded by faculty							X
	Disciplined work habits							X
	Maturity						X	
	Motivation							X
	Leadership						X	
	Integrity							X
X	Reaction to setbacks							
	Concern for others							X
	Self-confidence						X	
	Initiative, independence							X
	OVERALL							X

Alumni Interview Report

Academic (1+)
Genuine scholar, Summa potential, top grades, high 700 and 800 scores combined with evidence of original scholarship

Love of Learning—'outstanding'
Intellectual Curiosity—'outstanding'
Intellectual Originality—Rating—'outstanding'

Extracurricular, Athletic, Community, Employment, Family Commitments (1+)
State, national, or international recognition; truly unusual achievement

Personal Qualities (1+)
Rare personal appeal and character

Openness to new ideas and new people—'outstanding'
Contribution to college life—'outstanding'
What kind of roommate would this student be?—'outstanding'

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Overall (1+)

Absolutely superior for admissions; truly unusual in the entire applicant pool

Rare and rewarding exchange of ideas
Easy flow of conversation
Diamond in the Rough

Additional Comments

I had the distinct pleasure of meeting Ms. Giang Nguyen in my office. Giang is a bright, engaging young woman whose life to date has been to say the least, interesting. She has overcome a number of challenges to get her to the point that she can apply to Harvard.

Giang was born in Vietnam where she and her mother lived for some time. For most of this time, her father was in a refugee camp elsewhere in Asia. Fortunately, her family was able to emigrate to the United States when Giang was 9. They ultimately settled in a working class neighborhood here.

Both of Giang's parent's work long hours, six days a week as manicurists/nail technicians. As a consequence, after school Giang must retrieve her 2-year old sister from day care and watch and feed both the 2-year old and their 10-year old brother while both parents work late into the evening. Giang studies during this time. When I asked Giang if she ever goes out, she replied that she was planning to "hang out" with her friends but that she would have to take her sister and brother along.

Through all of this, Giang has done outstandingly well. Her class standing, SAT, ACT, and AP scores speak for themselves. The tests do reflect that English is her second language but I can guarantee that she communicates directly and clearly.

As a consequence of her family's circumstances, Giang's extracurricular activities have been limited for the most part due to school hours. She is a 4-year member of the Math Team of which she's presently Co-Captain. She enjoys learning about other cultures and is presently a member of not only the Vietnamese Club (of which she is Treasurer), she has also participated in the Korean Club and the International Dance Day. We did agree in our conversation that she might consider participating in the Mexican Club, one of Washington's other ethnic clubs. Of course, she is a member of both the National Honor Society and the Key Club; she participates in the school and community projects of both. These include guiding prospective students during open house, collecting the food for the homeless and gathering toys for tots.

Giang has been able to take out time from her family responsibilities to contribute to our local community. She tutors fourth graders in reading and has served as a day camp counselor on the mayor's park program for kids. As we discussed these endeavors, it became clear to me how interested and committed Giang is to nurturing children.

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Evelyn Satmar

School: Independence High School
Description: Large public high school in the Northeast; 60% of graduates attend four-year colleges; many AP courses offered
Ethnicity: Other ("mixed")

Mother:	Homemaker	**Father:**	Physician or surgeon
Education:	B.A., state university M.A., Ivy League University	**Education:**	B.A., Ivy League College M.D., state university

Siblings: Hannah (12)

Tentative field of study: Biological Sciences
Commitment: 4 (1-5 scale: 1, absolutely certain; 5, undecided)
Intended occupation: Undecided
Commitment: 4 (1-5 scale: 1, absolutely certain; 5, undecided)
College activities: Swimming, Diving; Writing/Literary Magazine
Commitment: 4 (1-5 scale: 1, absolutely certain; 5, undecided)

Class rank: 2/437

SAT:	800/700/770	800/720/730
SAT subject tests:	800 Literature	780 French Reading
	750 Math II	740 Molecular Biology

Extracurricular Activities:
Literary Magazine (9-12)
Editor-in-chief (12)
10 hours/week, 48 weeks/year
Environmental Club (10-12)
1 hour/week, 20 weeks/year
Science League (9-12)
Executive officer
4 hour/week, 10 weeks/year
Interact Club (9-12)
1 hour/week, 20 weeks/year
Foreign language club (9-12)
1 hour/week, 15 weeks/year
Gray's Anatomy challenge (10-12)

Athletics:
Swimming/diving (9-12)
Captain, rookie of the year
10 hours/week, 48 weeks/year

Employment:
Babysitting
Swim coach

Academic Honors:
National Merit Scholarship Semifinalist
AP Scholar with Honor
Accepted into state's governor's school for engineering and technology
Attended state's Summer Scholars Program

Advanced Placement Test Results:

Eng Lang & Comp	5
French Language	5
Biology	5
Psychology	5

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Short Answer (most meaningful activity)

I do not think I will ever forget the stillness of the room as I leaned forward to speak into the microphone. This was my moment, my chance to spill forth everything I had painstakingly acquired after two months of after-school sessions, perusing papers infused with heavily scientific jargon. It was the 2007 Gray's Anatomy Challenge.

Having now participated in both the 2007 and 2008 challenges, January and February have become synonymous with three hundred pages and bulging packets. My teammates and I consume facts as we scramble to absorb everything from the symptoms for angina pectoris to the millimeter count for vital lung capacity. We hold conversations while swapping words like tachycardia and orthopnea. As the returning champions, I look forward to defending our title in this year's competition. Yet regardless of the outcome, I will always cherish the confidence and the memories I have gained.

Personal Statement

In my household, names are everything. They are almost alive, imbued with such meaning I nearly expect them to crumble from the weight. There is such depth to those strings of letters, a scattered trail of wishes and dreams, lineage, and even a pinch of ambition. I like to think that being named after my great-grandparents was strategic, meant to provide me with twice the amount of spirit. For when I was born, "Evelyn Amalia" was boldly scrawled upon my birth certificate. And in that moment, I was handed much more than a name. I gained a chunk of identity—with enough growing room to wriggle my toes.

Even in my earliest memories, I can recall an abundance of titles. "Evelyn" rarely surfaced, obscured as it was by a masquerade of monikers. If not, I was păpuşă (pa-POO-sha), or doll, to my Romanian grandparents, and eventually even Jie Jie, an older sister.

Yet no matter what I was called, I understood what each and every name embodied, along with all its expectations. Which is why I was started to receive a new, unfamiliar nickname in grade school. There are, in fact, two theories as to how I first acquired my nickname at the age of seven. In one account, I was bestowed "Evie" by my second grade teacher. She had noted our potential rhyming relationship; her own nickname was "Jenny". The second theory involves my swim coach. He is a man with no time for trifles: one who responds to all medical complaints with a bellowing "Swim it out!" When we first met, he grinned and said, "Evelyn's too serious. How about Evie?" I had hardly dipped in my feet before he too had affixed a name tag that would last for years.

And for some time, I was content with being Evie—or păpuşă, or Jie Jie, or even Tang-Shan-Yu. But one day in third grade, I learned about palindromes, and they improbably altered my world. That night I discovered, with jealous alarm, that my younger sister, Hannah, possessed a name worthy of that privileged title: a palindrome. Although she is five years younger than I, my sister has grown to become my closest confidante. However, we both thrive on healthy competition—and that third grade grammar lesson was intriguing. I was fascinated by the sublime symmetry of the letters. So when I detected Hannah's palindrome, I sought my own with a vengeance. For the first time in my life, I created my own name. And with a quick removal of the "i" my nickname became Eve.

It was the one that endured for another five years. Still, I was curious to see what would happen upon entering high school. I was leaving my Quaker school where every teacher knows your name, your entire family, and all of your pets. Of my seventeen former

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classmates, none would accompany me to my next destination. The words "Independence High School" conjured ghastly imagery for months and at six thirty on that first breezy morning, even the school bus looked menacing. I seemed to pick up new names wherever I ventured and wondered what I could possibly adopt in such a dreadful place.

Luckily, Independence was very different from what I had envisioned. But what most struck me in those early days was that my nickname followed me. I remained Eve, or at least something like it. My nickname has prevailed throughout these past four years of high school. Perhaps it is because I chose it myself that it dictates no roles and carries no restrictions. Perhaps, I am more certain of my identity than I previously thought.

There was a time when I collected nicknames. In fact, if Shakespeare had asked me, "What's in a name?" my seven-year-old self would have replied "*everything.*" Yet lately, I have caught an enticing peek into the prospects ahead. It is true that I will always, to some extent, be an Eve. But I have gained a sense of self that no longer relies on labels or words. While recently skimming the Common Application, I came across a section entitled "Preferred Name." My fingers paused on the keys, thoughts aflutter with possibilities. But there is something so appealing in the unknown, and a new start. So for now, I am leaving that space blank.

Secondary School Report

I would like to take the opportunity to recommend Evelyn Satmar, a senior at Independence High School, as she seeks admission to your prestigious institute. I have worked with Evelyn as her School Counselor and I have found her to be an extraordinarily gifted student and a warm, personable individual. I have worked in secondary education for the past twenty-seven years and there are a few individuals that compare with Evelyn in terms of academic potential and actual achievement. As successful as she has been at the high school level, I am confident that her best work is still in the future. Evelyn has it all; poise, intelligence, personality and confidence. She is one of those students that only come around once or twice in a career, if you are lucky.

Evelyn is a superior student who has remained in our most rigorous college prep curriculum while at Independence. She has a genuine thirst for knowledge and is always trying to improve her skills. She presents as an individual who is much more mature than her years. Evelyn has the natural ability to think on her feet and handle any situation that confronts her with confidence. She works well with both adults and her peers and brings a positive, enthusiastic approach to whatever she is pursuing. By the time Evelyn graduates she will have accumulated 156 credits and 25 academic units. Please note the strength of her curriculum and the number of honors/AP classes she has taken. To underscore her academic achievement, Evelyn is a regular recipient of the school's annual departmental academic awards. Given the size of her class, it is quite an achievement to have received seven of these awards before her senior year commenced. Evelyn is Independence's only National Merit Semifinalist for the class of 2009, hoping to be a finalist. She was also invited to attend our state's very prestigious scholars program, a wonderful summer experience for the very best students. Just a quick look at Evelyn's list of accomplishments and activities indicates that she is tops among top students.

Evelyn has involved herself with many activities during her stay at Independence High School. To list her activities, awards and community service projects would be too extensive for a letter of this nature. Her extensive involvements are all the more remarkable

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when one considers her academic caseload. Obviously her time management skills are first rate. This is a student that has an emotional IQ to match her intellectual IQ. She relates well with her peers and has made a major difference at Independence High School.

I believe Evelyn will be an excellent addition to your student body and I would like to give her my unqualified recommendation. If you need additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Transcript

Grade 9		**Grade 10**	
English 1	A	English 2	A
French 2	A	French 3	A
Latin 2	A	French 4	A
Spanish 1/2	A	Algebra 2	A
Geometry	A	Adv Bio/Lab	A
Biology/Lab	A	US History 1	A
World Civ	A	Art 1	A
Phys Educ	A	Photography	A
Health Ed	A	Phys Educ 2	A
		Health Educ 2	A

Grade 11		**Grade 12**
AP Eng Lan & Comp	A	AP Eng Lit & Comp
AP French Language	A	Latin 3
Pre-Calculus	A	AP Calculus AB
Chemistry/Lab	A	AP Chemistry
Genetics/Lab	A	AP Physics B
U.S. History 2	A	World Cultures
AP Psychology	A	Phys Educ 4
Phys Educ 3	A	Health 4
Health Ed 3	A	

Teacher Recommendation 1

With more than thirty years of teaching experience, I have had the pleasure of working with many wonderful young adults who have made my career choice the perfect one. One of the most outstanding students and one of the kindest teenagers I have encountered during my career is Evelyn Satmar. She is one of a kind.

I have known Evelyn since her freshman year when she became a member of the French Club for which I was the advisor until my retirement this past June. Evelyn was a student in my French III honors class during her sophomore year and was enrolled in the French AP Language course I was teaching during her junior year. Evelyn's unique and genuine passion for the study of World Languages was truly evident when she practically taught herself French IV over the summer between her sophomore and junior years. Over only seven sessions of one hour's instruction each, she completed the entire complex French

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IV curriculum including reading the novel *Le Petit Prince*. In this way, Evelyn was able to move from the French III program into the AP course which was not going to be taught during her senior year. Evelyn took both the mid-term and final exams, earning a 98%. I was truly impressed with her self-motivation and diligence to complete all the work even though she received no formal high school credit for this commitment. Evelyn's academic achievement was beyond compare. In both the French III and AP classes, Evelyn earned a high A each marking period, sometimes a 100%, and was always the student with the highest average in class. Her hard work paid off when she scored a 5 on the AP exam.

Evelyn pursues everything with both cheerful enthusiasm and intellectual inquisitiveness. In addition to her ability to remember every complex grammatical concept and every new word spoken in class, Evelyn's oral proficiency skills are superb. I enjoyed listening to her AP taped speaking journal since her accent is so beautiful. Evelyn was always ready to work and learn something new. Whenever in doubt, she was not shy about asking insightful questions. Evelyn's exuberance was contagious and she was a delight to have in class. It is a pleasure to teach someone who is upbeat every day and has such a positive attitude toward school.

Evelyn has always shown interest in the French language and culture. Although very involved in many other extracurricular activities that occupied a great deal of her time, she was an extremely active member of the French Club. She participated in a large number of our activities, events and field trips. I was happy when she was able to join us because her warm personality and impeccable character make her a pleasure to be around. At the end of her sophomore year, Evelyn was inducted into the French National Honor Society. She was immediately elected to the executive committee and still holds that position this year. As an officer, she was and is still directly involved in the planning, organizing, and completion of the many activities. In both organizations, Evelyn was someone on whom I could count when needed. Her dedication and leadership skills were great assets to the club, the honor society, and to me as the advisor.

Evelyn has had the opportunity to travel to other countries, including France, with her family. She loves to immerse herself in another culture and learn about the differences from her own. She hopes to return to France one day and use what she has learned about the language and culture in her classes.

A student like Evelyn comes along only once in a great while. She is a mature, congenial, cooperative and caring person. She has the respect of both the faculty and her peers. Evelyn sets high standards for herself and will add to the academic environment of whichever college she attends. I was fortunate to be Evelyn's teacher not only because she is an excellent student but also because I have learned from her. Evelyn is a beautiful person inside and out, and she has my enthusiastic recommendation.

No basis		Below average	Average	Good (above average)	Very Good (well above average)	Excellent (top 10%)	Outstanding (top 5%)	One of the top few I've encountered in my career. (top 1%)
	Academic achievement							X
	Intellectual promise							X
	Quality of							X

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	writing							
	Creative, original thought							X
	Productive class discussion							X
	Respect accorded by faculty							X
	Disciplined work habits							X
	Maturity							X
	Motivation							X
	Leadership							X
	Integrity							X
	Reaction to setbacks							X
	Concern for others							X
	Self-confidence							X
	Initiative, independence							X
	OVERALL							X

Teacher Recommendation 2

I am pleased and proud to write a recommendation for a fine young woman, Evelyn Satmar. I have known Evelyn since her freshman year—both in and out of the classroom—and can attest to her excellence as a student as well as the strength of her character. As a freshman in my honors Biology class, I knew that Evelyn had deep intellectual curiosity. She would ask questions that showed she was really thinking about the concepts behind the material being taught. Her work always went beyond what was expected or required. Evelyn had a tremendous aptitude for science, and I learned that she approached all of her classes with the same level of commitment to excellence. Evelyn not only had a challenging course load her freshman year, but she became active in many of Independence's clubs and activities, including the Science League, the competitive team of which I am the Advisor. What I noted about Evelyn, even then, is that she is always smiling, serene and kind to everyone, and I remember thinking that this was truly a remarkably positive character trait for someone with her demanding schedule.

Evelyn took my genetics class during her junior year. This course is an honors elective typically taken by seniors. Evelyn's performance in this class was nothing short of stellar. She was focused and attentive in class, again asking questions that demonstrated the depth of her understanding. Her written assignments were always thoughtfully and thoroughly researched and written. She has meticulous lab skills—she was always very careful to follow protocol and handle lab equipment and data correctly. I found that Evelyn was able to work well by herself, but more importantly she was excellent within a lab group. She would take on the leadership role; yet all the while keep her team moving forward and patiently working with others who did not have her intellectual ability or lab skill. Each Friday in class we would discuss "Genome" by Matt Ridley in a Socratic-seminar type

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format. Evelyn was able to pick out the themes discussed in each chapter and contribute meaningful insights, as well as stimulate conversation within the group. I was able to get to know Evelyn on a more personal level when the entire class went on the senior class trip leaving Evelyn, the junior, behind. We would talk about school, friends, all sorts of teenage things, and I found her to be a mature, funny, caring, interesting, well-balanced young woman, with a very strong sense of ethics and integrity.

Evelyn has been a member of the Science League for four years, and is one of four students on the Gray's Anatomy Challenge Team. Gray's Anatomy Challenge is a college bowl-type competition that is locally televised each February, where a panel of physicians asks graduate level anatomy/physiology/medical questions to the students. The Independence High School team has won this competition for the last three years. Our successes have been a true team effort, led by Evelyn's preparation and poise under tremendous pressure. As an officer this year, Evelyn can be relied on to follow through with whatever needs to be done—and I can trust her word implicitly.

Besides her commitment to science, she is a dedicated athlete—a competitive swimmer not only for Independence but also for a community championship team. She is also an accomplished musician, performing at the local arts center. Evelyn is also an active and contributing member to many other clubs, including being the Editor-in-Chief of the school's literary magazine. She has won numerous awards and has been recognized for her scholastic excellence. She takes on tremendous responsibility both in and out of the classroom, and is able to prioritize all of her commitments. I have never seen her miss a deadline, nor have I ever seen her lose her composure. Evelyn has tremendous time-management skill, and has mastered effective study strategies.

I urge you to accept Evelyn Satmar for admission to your school. She will thrive with the intellectual demands than an academically challenging education will offer her, and will be a valued member of the residential community. Evelyn will proudly represent Independence High School and her University as she establishes her professional identity in the future.

No basis		Below average	Average	Good (above average)	Very Good (well above average)	Excellent (top 10%)	Outstanding (top 5%)	One of the top few I've encountered in my career. (top 1%)
	Academic achievement							X
	Intellectual promise							X
	Quality of writing							X
	Creative, original thought							X
	Productive class discussion							X
	Respect accorded by faculty							X
	Disciplined work habits							X

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	Maturity							X
	Motivation							X
	Leadership							X
	Integrity							X
	Reaction to setbacks							X
	Concern for others							X
	Self-confidence							X
	Initiative, independence							X
	OVERALL							X

Satmar 8

Evelyn Satmar—Alumni Interview Report

Academic (1)
Genuine scholar, Summa potential, top grades, high 700 and 800 scores combined with evidence of original scholarship

Love of Learning—'truly unusual'
Intellectual Curiosity—'outstanding'
Intellectual Originality—'outstanding'

Evelyn is the editor-in-chief of her school's literature magazine and enjoys writing poetry. She is also an officer in her school's science league team, which has won the Gray's Anatomy contest in cardiovascular science competition for the last 3 years. She is excited about trying to win the fourth straight competition soon. She also is in her school's Chemistry Charter Club, which teaches seminars for younger students.

I liked her methodical approach to her future intellectual pursuits. She is looking for an interdisciplinary experience in school and her career and is currently most interested in Environmental Science and Public Policy.

She's really very close to "truly unusual" in intellectual curiosity and originality, which is why I gave her a 1 overall.

Extracurricular, Athletic, Community, Employment, Family Commitments (2+)
Local or regional recognition; major accomplishments

What I really like about Evelyn was that she has a handful of interests outside of school and has focused in on those for which she has a true passion.

She has been swimming competitively for many years and is on her high school's varsity team, primarily now doing individual medleys and the backstroke. Her team is apparently very competitive regionally. She also volunteers as a swimming coach for an 8U team on weekends and during the summer.

She has several officer positions in extracurricular clubs and activities. She is the editor-in-chief of her school literary magazine and enjoys writing poetry. She is president of the Environment Club. She is an officer of her school Science League team, which has won several competitions (see Academic). She is also an officer for Interact, a community service club that does fundraisers and volunteers at shelters and retirement homes. She is also an officer in her school's Chemistry Charter Club, which teaches younger students.

Evelyn has also traveled to some interesting places, including her parents' countries of origin, China and Romania, as well as Israel and Greece. She has enjoyed those experiences and feels that they have positively influenced her thinking and approach to different types of people.

Personal Qualities (1)
Rare personal appeal and character

Openness to new ideas and new people—'outstanding'
Contribution to college life—'outstanding'
What kind of roommate would this student be?—'truly unusual'

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Evelyn ranks very high in all of the example characteristics listed above. She has a unique blend of poise, confidence, sincerity, and humility in her demeanor. She is thoughtful and expresses her ideas very clearly. More than most students her age, she was able to engage in a two-way discussion on a wide variety of topics; she was very interesting to speak with. I enjoyed the time speaking with her and am completely convinced that she will contribute greatly to her college, both in the classroom and through her extracurricular involvement and social interactions.

Overall (2+)
Clear admit; one to recruit

Rare and rewarding exchange of ideas
Easy flow of conversation

While I hold the ranking of 1 for a once in a lifetime type of candidate, I must say that Evelyn was probably the best candidate for Harvard that I have met in about 8 years of interviewing. She might not be the absolute best in any given candidate, but I really liked how well rounded she is and how much she has to offer in every regard.

Additional Comments

Evelyn visited Harvard's campus and sat in on some classes. She was enthusiastic when telling me about one of the classes. She also has thought carefully about what she is looking for in a school, including the scholastic, community, geographical, and social aspects. When she says that she is looking for a diverse group of students and experiences, I don't think she's memorized it from the Harvard brochure—I think she is truly looking for and ready for what Harvard has to offer. She will be an asset if accepted for admission.

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Megan Turner

School: Mountain High School
Description: Small, regional high school serving the students of several towns in one of the Mountain States. Located on the corner of a Native American Reservation. Approximately 60% of students attend four-year colleges. Few AP courses offered.
Ethnicity: Native American and Caucasian

Mother: Teacher/tutor
College: State college

Father: Financial consultant
College: State university

Siblings: Jenna (13)

Tentative field of study: Social Studies
Commitment: 2 (1-5 scale: 1, absolutely certain; 5, undecided)
Intended occupation: Government/Politics
Commitment: 3 (1-5 scale: 1, absolutely certain; 5, undecided)
College activities: Journalism and Crew
Commitment: 2 (1-5 scale: 1, absolutely certain; 5, undecided)

Class rank: 1/90

SATI: 730/740/800
SAT II: 780 World History 640 Math II 780 Literature

Extracurricular Activities:
School newspaper (9-12)
Editor in chief
7 hours/wk
Lincoln-Douglas Debate (9-12)
Captain
8 hours/wk
Constitution team (9-12)
Captain
3 hours/wk
Community service (9-12)
President
5 hours/wk

Athletics:
JV Cross-country (9-12)
IM Basketball (9-12)

Employment:
Freelance writer
4 hours/wk
Intern at Chamber of Commerce

Academic Honors:
National Merit Semifinalist
Quill and Scroll Review Award
Youth Editors of America Award
Various excellence awards from school

Advanced Placement Test Results:
Eng Literature 5

Summer Activities:
Telluride Summer Program

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Honors institute at State College
Journalism camp

Short answer (most meaningful activity)

The phrase "power of the press" has different meaning for me. Journalism stripped the fat from my writing and created my leadership skills.

My press pass allows me to satisfy my curiosity on all sorts of subjects, admitting me to the offices of the city, county, and officials so that I can explore my passion for politics firsthand or behind the superintendent's desk for information no other students have. My awareness of what's going on around me must always be super-high; otherwise, we'll be scooped. And while I'm honing my nose for news, I have to keep an eye out for trouble. After all, if I expect my staff to follow the schedule I set or accept the grades I give, I have to earn their affection—or at least respect. It's obvious that Machiavelli never ran a newspaper. He'd have had a lot of empty space on his hands.

As much as I love the advantages journalism has given me, my affection goes deeper. There's just something about boiling down information for public consumption. It's lovely to think of myself as part of the grand tradition of the fourth estate. The way a page falls into place in my head before I can arrange in on screen is priceless. Journalism is my art, my altered state of consciousness. I could never, ever give it up.

Personal Statement

"I'm going to grow up and be just like Dagny Taggart!"

It's another one of those days. You know, one of those useless chunks of light sandwiched between fodder for cheesy skyscapes, the sort of day where it just doesn't seem worth it to get out of bed and drag through another day of school...until my mantra creeps into my consciousness. The vision of what I might become is enough to send me to the shower without another murmur.

Dagny (I always think of her by her first name, as though we were best friends and I occasionally drop by for tea) is everything I always vaguely imagined myself as at some future date. The heroine of Ayn Rand's *Atlas Shrugged* is a business tycoon who is completely consumed by a job she loves, struggling against purposeless red tape and bureaucratic inefficiency while hanging around in nicely tailored Italian suits; who could ask for more? I have always envisioned myself with a corner office, spike heels crunching intimidatingly on tiles scattered with the fragments of a glass ceiling. Throw in a few gentlemen friends like my dear Ms. Taggart's, and I've got a euphoric life ahead of me.

Of course, there are a few facets to my capitalist compadre that I willfully ignore...like the fact that she sleeps around, miraculously avoiding all of the usual consequences thereof. Her sudden conversion to happy housemaid upon introduction to John Galt doesn't sit too well, either. Her flaws, though, are forgivable. I need an idol and she's ready-made for the purpose, stripped of human frailty and that nasty propensity to make mistakes. She's easier to ensconce in alabaster than a real human being, someone who will undoubtedly shift around a little bit and make cracks in my nice casting. Something in me needs that mental vision of what my life ought to be like. Only she can provide it.

We share so much, that figment of a bitter Russian woman's delusions of grandeur and I. I empathize strongly with Dagny's feeling that no one around her understands what

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makes her tick or is similar to her in the least. I got my first taste of Galt's Gulch this summer under the auspices of the Telluride Association; I am again praying that my story will parallel Dagny's, foreshadowing my return into a more complete paradise.

Dagny is defined and complemented by her job, willing to sacrifice everything to her beautiful productivity. It gives me infinite hope that I might grab hold of a career that fulfills my promise instead of filling my time. I have found temporary substitutes for her megalomania, immersing myself in the logic of economics, the beautiful guesswork of theoretical physic, the ivory towers cobbled together by dead white men with lots of time on their hands. All the while, I know that it is a prelude to something, something that I will stumble into and that fits in ways I am powerless to describe. Like Dagny, I'll be right where I belong. Unlike her, I won't spring fully formed from my own head. I'll have to claw my way upwards, with all of the mistakes and pain that implies. That's precisely why I need her. Those mornings when the snail's pace of my classes is getting me down or when I'm ready to settle for a profession instead of a passion, I can hold her in my mind as an example of what my future can and will be like. Dagny existed, at least in someone's head. That's a constant comfort to me—and a perpetual reminder that I must keep sprinting forward full-bore regardless of what gets in my way. Even if that obstacle is myself.

Supplementary Essay

High school is, inevitably, a disillusioning experience. For most people, the moment comes when it's apparent that puppy love isn't true or friendships aren't forever. For me, it happened the moment I sat down in freshman English and was assigned a book I'd read in second grade.

Obviously, high school wasn't the haven of academia I'd been expecting. I was disappointed, but not crushed; I could always continue reading nonstop. That did, however, give a crazy, grapeshot pattern to my education. Some areas were covered in excruciating detail, some glossed over entirely. I was sure high school would give me focus, direction, maybe even a class that presented a daily challenge. Whoops.

My gifted and talented teacher set to work immediately. Even before my high school career began, she'd managed to get me admitted to a debate camp. I was in my element. I uncovered a definite flair for argumentation, as well as an interest in philosophy that persists to this day.

Debate saved my freshman year, giving me something to focus on. My work paid off with more than just a winning record; I was invited onto the senior-only "We the People: The Citizen and Constitution" team as a sophomore. Here, I found another one of the great passions of my life. Case law is fascinating and accessible, an easy target for someone bent on self-education.

I spent my sophomore summer taking a college English course at our State University. It was better than I had come to expect in high school, but it still didn't ring a four-alarm in my head. On the bright side, it did allow me to bypass junior-level English in favor of a senior "advanced placement" course. On the first day of school, our teacher told us that "If you get a five on the AP exam, they give you a pair of wings and incorporate you into heaven." No one in his class had ever done it, more than enough to make me consider it a personal challenge. I'm still waiting for the wings, but I snagged the score.

Meanwhile, I tried to capture that college feeling again that fall. An outreach program that had fizzled at our high school for lack of interest still offered classes at the

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town down the road. Although I discovered that sociology definitely wasn't for me, I had grounding in the subject and a new weapon in my debate arsenal.

The Telluride Association stepped in to save me from boredom or despair, offering a summer program focused on environmental policy. It not only fell right in with my passion for politics but had direct bearing on my part of the world. Seminar was exactly what I've always thought a class should be. There was extensive reading required, to be sure, but the professors added detail and context to it in class. There were few enough of us that they could focus on our particular interests; my professor ferreted out several textbooks in environmental economics so that I could pursue my specialty. I learned as much fro the people around me as I did in class; folks who had immersed themselves in everything from anarchist theory to the intricacies of the Falun Gong movement were willing to discuss it with me—often all night long. I look back on my time at TASP as the happiest, most productive time of my learning life. There mere thought of it keeps me trudging through high school.

In the interim, though, I am far from bored. My gifted and talented teacher and I secured a grant for experimental online courses in the subjects that interest me; I'm currently pursuing AP macroeconomics. I have been able to design my own curriculum to pursue interests in philosophy and American history. I can still throw myself into journalism and debate with characteristically excessive enthusiasm. Through it all, college is still my Nirvana. I'm expecting to be incorporated anytime soon.

Secondary School Report

Enthusiastically, and without a single reservation, I am pleased to recommend Megan Turner for admission to Harvard University.

By every standard, Megan has been an exceptional student and citizen at Mountain High School. She is an independently motivated student, who possesses a keen intelligence and an inquisitive curiosity for knowledge. Megan has not only followed the Honors Curriculum; she has supplemented it with opportunities for independent study in journalism, constitutional law, and advanced studies. She has also taken two college courses, earning A's in both. Megan has held a perfect 4.0 GPA, while taking the most academically challenging curriculum offered at Mountain High School, holding leadership positions, and actively participating in the extracurricular program. Within these courses and extracurricular activities, she has developed the ability to listen to concerns, view issues with an open mind, and express her ideas effectively and convincingly through written and oral communication. Over the past four years, Megan has made an invaluable contribution to the school newspaper, serving as editor and earning several awards as noted within her application. She is held in high regard by the staff and she has become a leader among her peers due to her ability to get the job done.

Ingenuity, determination, and intellectual curiosity are all qualities that have earned Megan the respect of her peers and teachers. For example, Megan has severe asthma, but she has not let this deter her from participating in physical education and athletic events. She joined the cross-country team immediately. Even though she is usually last in competition, she has never walked a step, and more importantly, she is a role model for her peers. Understandably, Megan is revered by her teammates and coach for her courage and determination.

Based on my own work with Megan, I know that she has faced frustrations in attempting to find a curriculum that will challenge her sufficiently. Although she has been

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frank with me about the fact that she cannot wait to escape high school in order to move on to college, she is careful never to make these comments around her peers. Instead, she has sought to find every outlet possible for her abundance of energy and desire to learn.

In summary, Megan is an extraordinarily adept "student." She self-challenges. She reads in-depth to strengthen her understanding of issues and ideas. And, she strives diligently to be balanced in all academic areas. Her intellectual ability coupled with her commitment to excellence make Megan and exceptional candidate for Harvard.

Mountain High School Transcript

Grade 9		**Grade 10**	
Earth Science	A+	Biology	A
English 9	A	English 10	A+
Geometry	A+	Math 3	A
World History	A	Spanish 1	A
Journalism	A+	Journalism	A
PE/Health	A	Econ/Constit Law	A
		PE/Health	A

Grade 11		**Grade 12**	
AP Eng	A+	AP Government	A
Adv Studies	A	Adv Topics	A
Adv Math/Stats	A	Calculus	A-
Chemistry	A	IndSt AP Econ	A
Math 4	A	IndSt Spanish 3	A
Spanish 2	A	Physics	A
US History	A	Journalism	A
Journalism	A		

Teacher Recommendation 1

Megan Turner is unique in my 26-year teaching career. Throughout her four years at Mountain High School she has consistently impressed me and I am delighted to recommend her to you for your consideration.

Her command of the written language is unparalleled. Megan writes with clear, precise, comprehensive style with the ability to entertain so a reader chuckles out loud, enlighten so the reader knows that she has just learned something important or persuade so that the reader will think differently. She tackles stories for our school's nationally award-winning newspaper about issues such as conflict on our reservation with interviews from the tribal chairman and the county commissioners. Both sides found that Megan's stories were better handled, more objective and thorough than the professional press. She writes nostalgic, moving reviews such as her account of the Bob Dylan concert last year which she attended with her parents. Her news stories regularly run on the front page and her editorials provide a strong student voice and school leadership, often provoking action or needed change. Each time she writes for the regional newspaper, where she serves on the student editorial board with other high school students from throughout the western part of the state, we are flooded with reader letters of congratulations. Megan's writing grabs

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readers. Her writing has earned her state (first place at the state level for the last three years) and national recognition (Quill and Scroll Society, American Scholastic Press Association, US News and World Reports, and recently the Society of Young Newspaper Professionals).

Recognized as extremely bright and beyond her peers' academic capabilities throughout her educational career here, Megan's work on the newspaper has allowed her to grow and develop personal and leadership skills. It has been a joy to watch her take on challenges and work until she masters them. Her efforts in helping others write satisfactory stories has also been a challenge she has met exceedingly well. Younger students regularly come to Megan for help with stories, how to work the computer, and general advice on how to do their jobs on the newspaper. She now commands an award winning newspaper as editor-in-chief who confidently guides her staff to new heights. Her capacity to grow and her coach-ability make her a delight for any teacher. She is a joy to have in class.

Her superb intellect, capacity for growth, and ability to absorb information is phenomenal. Megan delights in learning and often is the one to "think outside the box" when we tackle problems or issues. Her intellectual capacity is beyond that of any student with whom I have thus far come in contact. She challenges herself to read thought-provoking books on a wide variety of topics, take Advanced Placement courses on-line beyond what is offered at our school, engage in intellectual debates for the fun of it, and to do everything in her capacity to broaden her knowledge and understanding.

As for a hardship she has overcome, her ability to now deal with her severe asthma stands out in my mind. Megan battled severe asthma during her freshman year and missed several days, spent time in the hospital, and could have easily succumbed to depression over this entire ordeal. She did not. After each bout, she made up all work in a timely fashion and carried on. After attending a 3-week asthma clinic out of state, she came back with knowledge about how to deal with her problems herself and was undaunted by the fact that on troubled days she needs to wear to school a pouch with her medications and give herself shots if they become necessary. Many students would find this embarrassing, but Megan takes it all in stride. She will readily discuss her problems if asked about them. She will share her knowledge with others suffering similar troubles. I firmly believe she has a handle on her medical problem and it will not slow her down in any future endeavor. She did this through persistence, commitment to a goal, and personal fortitude.

Once again, Megan is an exceptional person. Her character, integrity, and her personal qualities are exemplary. She provides leadership to students, the school, and the community by her service to the newspaper, her strong writing, and her helping of others. Her public speaking, discussion skills, and debating experience have honed her into an exceptional communicator. She is goal-oriented, committed to her learning, and has the intellectual capacity to do anything she sets her mind to. She is well-liked and respected by her peers and the teaching staff here. She is the type of individual who will make her mark on the world. I believe Megan Turner is an ideal candidate for Harvard and recommend her to you and vehemently urge you to accept her as an applicant to your school.

No basis		Below average	Average	Good (above average)	Very Good (well above average)	Excellent (top 10%)	Outstanding (top 5%)	One of the top few I've encountered in my career. (top 1%)
	Academic achievement							X

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	Intellectual promise							X
	Quality of writing							X
	Creative, original thought							X
	Productive class discussion							X
	Respect accorded by faculty							X
	Disciplined work habits							X
	Maturity							X
	Motivation							X
	Leadership							X
	Integrity							X
	Reaction to setbacks							X
	Concern for others							X
	Self-confidence							X
	Initiative, independence							X
	OVERALL							X

Teacher Recommendation 2

For the past six years, I've had the privilege and honor of working with one of those rare students every teacher dreams of challenging. The brilliance, determination, motivation, intellect, and energy found in Megan Turner are extraordinarily uncommon and exceptional. She is without equal.

As the K-12 Gifted and Talented Teacher/Coordinator for our school district, I work with many gifted and highly able students, but Megan is a standout even among the standouts. I have known and worked with her since I arrived in our town six years ago, when she was a seventh-grader. Throughout that time, I have been Megan's GT teacher, as well as her Debate coach and mentor.

I have learned more new words from Megan than I ever did from my own English teachers! Reading, writing, expressing, thinking, and ideas are as much a part of Megan as is her eye color. She devours books and wishes she had her own library filled with them, floor to ceiling, wall to wall. I love to read myself and look forward to the day when I can reach onto a shelf and pull off a book by Megan. There isn't a doubt in my mind that it will happen. For my Great Books class, which Megan took as an eighth-grader, one of the assignments was a short project that included a two-page minimum written requirement. Megan handed in 23 typed pages…a story that answered all the necessary questions and even some I had not anticipated. Last year for my Advanced Studies class at the high school (self-directed study), she further expanded and developed her incredible abilities. She read the works of various philosophers and philosophies (Ayn Rand, Kant, Nietzsche, the Bible, and

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others), wrote comparative summaries of their ideas, and concluded by writing her own philosophical credo! What most of us would consider a daunting task, Megan saw as a delicious opportunity to do what she loves and does so well: read, think, and write. Megan is a true THINKER. She analyzes and evaluates as calmly, easily, and naturally as the rest of us breathe. "Wisdom is knowledge digested," she once said. Megan digests everything and has, as a result, a level of wisdom that is rare even among adults.

A National Merit Finalist who participated in the Telluride Program this summer, Megan doesn't take her natural abilities for granted; rather, she develops them, fine tunes them, and challenges herself to use her abilities for the pursuit of personal interests and community gain. Megan is definitely not one to settle for "good enough." She instead searches for countless and creative solutions to make something not just better, but the best. Megan is the kind of scholar who will seek opportunities and create them where none exist, and she will forge for herself an active and innovative purpose for her years at Harvard University. While working with Megan these past six years, I have been consistently impressed with her ability to perfect and polish that which is already outstanding. With great determination and a rare level of brilliance, Megan brings to her pursuits a flair for creative and undaunted success. She is one to search for and find the possibilities that others are not willing or able to see. Megan knows that success in any area often means creating or discovering that which everyone else said was impossible or ridiculous. She is a true visionary.

Megan readily recognizes her adversities as straightforwardly as she does her vast abilities. She'll be the first to admit that while she excels academically, she is not athletically inclined. Add to this her battles with very severe asthma, for which she has been hospitalized numerous times, and one would think she has plenty of reason to avoid exercise. Yet, Megan is tremendously persistent, never allowing these weaknesses to get the better of her. She works out regularly, runs every step the other girls do in PE, plays intramural basketball, and even joined the cross-country team. What would have been a convenient excuse to others has been an engaging challenge to Megan. She strives to overcome what she can and to learn to deal with what she cannot. That is why her former PE teacher will honestly say, "Megan is my hero."

Another adversity Megan has overcome is her early years of schooling. She began school in another district where she was mistakenly identified in the first grade for their special education program. (They apparently placed her in there because in the process of writing a ten-page story—clearly pretty rare for a six-year-old!—she wrote some of the letters backwards—something naturally common for six-year-olds.) This placement is obviously not where she should have been, yet she spent months there writing her name in the sand and being asked to perform various other tasks far below her actual abilities. I marvel today that the experience did not ruin her outlook on school. Far too many highly and profoundly gifted students will drop out of school after similar circumstances. Yet Megan bounced back with her indomitable determination and unbeatable optimism. Rather than be jaded about what had happened, she prefers to laugh at the irony and to tell the fascinating stories of how she played mind tricks with the teachers to keep herself challenged.

I also work with Megan as the head coach for our high school's Speech, Debate, and Drama team, for which Megan is a Lincoln-Douglas debater. Debate is a passion for Megan, as well as another voice. Her dedication, hard work, and desire to learn contribute to her impressive 88% record, a #1 (top seed) ranking in the Western Division, and a 7th place finish at the State tournament, a reflection not only of her hard work and dedication, but of

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her great analytical and communication skills as well. Through working with Megan on the Debate Team, I have also had many opportunities to observe her leadership skills. As an upper-level team member, she can always be counted on to be a great role model for the younger members of the team. She even devotes energy to priming the new debaters for competition, and assists me each spring in coaching the debaters on our middle school team. She easily finds the balance between establishing rapport and setting high standards. As a result, the younger debaters have tremendous respect for her and have learned debate skills, tact, communication, and leadership from her.

Beyond everything else, Megan is truly herself at an age when most kids struggle with identity. It is a comfort level hard-won for her, as her peers have often ridiculed her for her obvious intelligence and unique idiosyncrasies: "I don't really have fear of rejection by my peers anymore. I used to be rejected all the time and have gradually outlived it. (Maybe I've outgrown it!!!) I figure, if they don't like me the way I am, that's their problem." Megan is full of sparkle, life, curiosity, depth, and messages. I would describe her as determined, insightful, intelligent, creative, honest, innovative, responsible, funny, independent, honorable, sincere, original, hard-working, perceptive, energetic, thoughtful, confident, rare, brilliant, motivated, analytical, and real. Megan is a national treasure.

I truly do not know of anyone more worthy of admittance to your esteemed University. I offer this recommendation with the deepest sincerity and the highest hopes. Please feel free to contact me if you have any further questions. I would be thrilled to do whatever else I can for Megan. With my greatest enthusiasm…

No basis		Below average	Average	Good (above average)	Very Good (well above average)	Excellent (top 10%)	Outstanding (top 5%)	One of the top few I've encountered in my career. (top 1%)
	Academic achievement							X
	Intellectual promise							X
	Quality of writing							X
	Creative, original thought							X
	Productive class discussion							X
	Respect accorded by faculty							X
	Disciplined work habits							X
	Maturity							X
	Motivation							X
	Leadership							X
	Integrity							X
	Reaction to setbacks							X
	Concern for							X

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	others							
	Self-confidence							X
	Initiative, independence							X
	OVERALL							X

Teacher Recommendation 3

Last summer I team-taught a seminar on environmental policy for eighteen exceptional high school juniors. Winners of national competition, students in previous seminars matriculated at Ivy League and other elite institutions with few exceptions. Sponsored by the Telluride Foundation, the class met for three hours every weekday for six weeks. Each student wrote short papers, delivered a term paper, and participated in discussions. The quality of the work generally was equal to that of students in my senior honors seminar at my own university. Teaching this seminar was both satisfying and exhausting for me, a political science professor, currently on leave and directing a program elsewhere.

Writing a recommendation for Megan Turner is not easy because she is easy to caricature. That caricature is of a bright young woman angry with her parents for not making more money and for putting her in a mediocre high school because they live in one of the Mountain States. Megan strongly asserted her belief in markets as the solution to almost every imaginable public problem. In the first weeks of the seminar, Megan was given to *ad hominum* comments and to dismiss any criticisms of her views as mindlessly ideological.

By the end of the summer, Megan had learned to avoid *ad hominum* comments and respond with appropriate logic and arguments to critics. She even admitted that there were instances where government interventions were needed. Her final paper, an analysis of the possibility of sustainable development, was a fine well-documented paper. Based upon her written work, I would rank Megan Turner around the fourth or fifth best student in the seminar. Based upon the quality of her oral participation, she would rank lower.

Ms. Turner has baggage. She is unreasonably obsessed with gaining admittance to your university. She cannot articulate why Harvard would be better for her than other good universities and colleges, beyond an assertion that Harvard is the best. If you accept her, Megan will likely resemble some other bright students from the inner city, i.e. wanting to escape by landing at Harvard with all Harvard means, yet also missing home and its comforts. Megan's challenge is to trust her own abilities and to open herself to liberal learning. She has much to gain from a Harvard education.

Alumni Interview Report

Academic (1)

Genuine scholar, Summa potential, top grades, high 700 and 800 scores combined with evidence of original scholarship

Love of Learning—'outstanding'
Intellectual Curiosity—'outstanding'
Intellectual Originality—Rating—'outstanding'

Extracurricular, Athletic, Community, Employment, Family Commitments (2+)

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Local or regional recognition; major accomplishment(s).

Personal Qualities (1)

Rare personal appeal and character

Openness to new ideas and new people—'outstanding'
Contribution to college life—'outstanding'

Overall (1)

Absolutely superior for admissions; truly unusual in the entire applicant pool

Rare and rewarding exchange of ideas
Easy flow of conversation
Diamond in the Rough

Additional Comments

Megan is a student of unusual ability, with a wide range of interests both in and out of school, a lot of confidence and ambition, which, in her case, seem justified and realistic, as well as an engaging personality that made the interview enjoyable as well as productive for the interviewer. To summarize a little early in this report, I think she would do splendidly at Harvard both academically and in other activities. Harvard would really give this young woman from our rural state the opportunities she needs.

Megan made two remarks during the interview that I think revealed a lot about the seriousness of her interest in Harvard. One was, "going to Harvard is the one thing I've known I want to do just about all my life It's the one place where I've thought I could follow up on all my interests." The other quote was, "I've been reading the Crimson on the web for many months, and I think it's head and shoulders above any other college paper I've seen. I would love to work there if I go to Harvard." She has some credentials for this evaluation and remark since she has numerous writing awards, is the editor of her school paper and was editor of her middle-school paper before that. Among these awards is a national Youth Editors of America award for a concert review written for the daily paper in our capital; a Quill and Scroll award; and an American Scholastic Press Association outstanding investigative journalism award given for a story in the high-school paper about safety and security at her school relating the topic to the Columbine School attack in Colorado.

Megan is also a top high-school debater in the state and co-captain of the school debate team. Because the team has no official coach, Megan says, "I function somewhat in that role also." She was undefeated in debate this school year until two weeks ago. Outside of high school activities, she has coached middle-school debate, helped teach a fifth-grade gifted and talented class in middle school, and been a tutor for third-grade students. She seems like a generous and "giving" person.

She mentioned two summer programs that she said had a big influence on her interests in school as well as her thoughts about the future. One was a program this past summer called "We the People" sponsored by the US Congress to promote study of the US Constitution and the laws derived from it, and the other was a program called the Telluride Association Summer Humanities Program which seems to be a project bringing together good students interested in humanities, encourage study and research, and produce some writing.

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About the first one, Megan said, "I was fascinated by the law cases interpreting the intent of the Constitution. If law school is like that, I could easily see myself there." She added that she really hadn't thought about law as a serious interest before being in the program. "I'm thrilled to have discovered so many new interests of mine!" About the Telluride program, she said, "it was the teachers and other students that made the program." She said that the discussions she had with teachers and students were "the best kind of school experience I have ever had." She produced a paper about "Sustainable Development in the World Today."

Megan has a 4.0 GPA, is getting A's in all her classes currently and is a National Merit Finalist. Her writing interest was reinforced by a summer program in which she took English classes and participated in a workshop for high-school students writing for newspapers which was run by the School of Journalism at our state university.

When we talked about possible fields of study in college, and the future in general, she said she is interested in writing, but also mentioned being attracted to business and particularly economics as a possible college major. She followed this by saying, "you know there is such a tremendous influence of economics on the important events in the world."

Actually, she ended up by saying she could see herself quite content in such fields as news writing, government, politics, economics, law, and maybe even history r medicine. I would give her a very good chance of being successful in any of these fields and, more importantly for this report, of making a significant contribution in a college environment like that at Harvard.

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Tracey Eckham

School: Cantor School
Description: Small, private, college-preparatory day school for girls located in metropolitan area in the mid-Atlantic (partnership with "brother school"); 100% of students attend four-year colleges.
Ethnicity: Unknown

Mother: Homemaker
College: BA from an Ivy League college
JD from State School

Father: Headmaster
College: BA from an Ivy League College
EdD from Ivy League Ed School

Siblings: Jack (15)

Tentative field of study: Physical Science
Commitment: 2 (1-5 scale: 1, absolutely certain; 5, undecided)
Intended occupation: Undecided
Commitment: 5 (1-5 scale: 1, absolutely certain; 5, undecided)
College activities: Varsity crew and visual arts
Commitment: 1 (1-5 scale: 1, absolutely certain; 5, undecided)

Class rank: 85%/71

SATI: 730/720/740
SAT II: 790 Physics 770 Math II 720 World History

Extracurricular Activities:
Art and Writing (9-12)
Amnesty International (11-12)
Habitat for Humanity (12)

Athletics:
Year-round crew (9-12)
Varsity, All Metro
State Champs
Cross-country (11-12)
Captain

Employment:
Camp counselor
(summers)

Academic Honors:
Writer's Prize (English Department)
National Merit Commended

Advanced Placement Test Results:

Eng Lang & Comp	4
Physics B	5
US History	4

Summer Activities:
Not provided.

Short answer (most meaningful activity)

My dad taught me how to scull when I was eleven. Since that time, crew has become one of my most important commitments. It has taught me the value of working hard for

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what you want. At the same time, it has also brought me closer to my dad. Crew is a sport that constantly challenges and often disappoints. However, the result is that it has made me more confident and more independent. It forces me to rely on myself for motivation. No one else can do an erg piece or run up the Exorcist stairs (common crew workouts) for me. Crew is meaningful for me because it has given me the courage that has made me a stronger person.

Recently, I raced with my dad in a parent-child double on his fifty-first birthday. Because he had originally taught me how to scull in a double, it brought back memories of when I still relied on him for balance and guidance on the water, and how even now sometimes I still do. I know that he will be proud of me no matter what the outcome of any race, and that he respects me for my dedication to this sport. Thus, crew is meaningful for me because it has strengthened me both personally and my bond with my father.

Personal Statement

Last year, after taking half a semester of regular physics, I was offered the opportunity to switch into the AP class. I had originally tried to be in that class, but it was already full. By second quarter a space had opened up. Knowing that I was unhappy in the non-AP class, the science department gave me a choice. I could stay where I was and endure the rest of the year, or I could switch into the AP class and face the prospect of not only the harder work load but of making up a quarter's worth of work as well. Switching into an AP class midway through the semester was unprecedented in any department. Therefore, I had no way of knowing how this could turn out. I only knew at the time that this was what I desperately wanted to do. The science department drew up an agreement stating that if I accepted the switch I would be completely caught up in the class by Thanksgiving, two weeks away, and that I understood the risk involved. Accepting this opportunity could have had serious repercussions on my grade in both physics and in my other classes. But I was not thinking of my grades. I needed a class in which my mind could be fully engaged, and regular physics was not the answer. I signed the contract.

The immediate effects of my decision were not good. According to the agreement I had to drop my art class in order to have more time to make up the extra work. Meanwhile, the class had just started learning about momentum, applying what they knew about conservation of energy. In my old class we had been learning about light and sound. I would sit in class feeling slightly dazed while the other students worked on collision problems. After school two days a week and on Sundays I would meet with my math teacher, whom my parents had hired as a tutor. She spoke with a thick Russian accent, and it was hard for me to understand what she was saying. However, without her help I never could have learned a thing. By Thanksgiving I was completely caught up with my work; what mattered now was how much of it I would retain.

Looking back on my decision, I do not think I could have made any other choice. At the time I did not fully realize the risk I had just committed myself to. My grades did drop. I often felt overloaded with work. Also, physics does not come easily to me. It would take me a while to understand even basic concepts. At no one point do I remember regretting my decisions. Physics became my favorite class. I cannot imagine going through a school year without it. For this reason I am now taking AP Physics C. I am the only girl in a class of seventeen guys, most of whom have already taken AP Calculus. It's a hard class, and sometimes I feel as though I know nothing about physics at all. But the challenge motivates me to work harder. Being in a class with all guys simply gives me more incentive.

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Any risk has its rewards and downsides. My decision to switch classes was no exception. I realized that it was up to me whether or not the rewards came up on top. In the end, my work and sacrifice paid off, which I think is true of any risk where one is willing to put in the effort. Putting something on the line and then being willing to fight for it is admirable in any circumstance. I'm thankful that the opportunity presented itself to me, and for the foresight to immediately realize in which class I was better off.

Secondary School Report

Tracey's AP US History teacher, who teaches most Cantor students by the time they graduate, describes her simply as "very, very smart." Tracey isn't always as focused as she could be, but he offers an example of her powers of concentration. He always gives a big multiple-choice test just before the AP exam, and Tracey appeared 10 minutes late, looking a bit distracted and apologizing for not having studied sufficiently. She had forgotten that the test was that day. She took it nonetheless, finished with the rest of the class, and scored 96%. He was astonished, although (he says) he should probably not have been, knowing Tracey. While doing well academically engages her, she is clearly passionate about two interests: writing and lightweight crew. Last year, Tracey, a National Merit Commended Scholar, produced some excellent critical and creative work, winning the 11th grade Writers' Prize, and she received the highest accolades from her crew coach for her athletic and leadership skills. "Tracey is the only Senior to be in Varsity for three years straight," the coach notes, "She deserves it."

As Tracey's Foundations of American Literature teacher points out, "She has sophisticated critical powers, and she can marshal them to ace exams." Whereas some students falter under pressure, Tracey thrives. She says it's her competitive spirit. Her crew coach laughs that one reason she has Tracey rowing in bow is that "She makes the boat fast, there. It's a very good feeling as a coach to shove a crew off for finals with a rower who'll be unhappy with anything but gold in the first seat to cross the line." Athletically and academically, Tracey is energized by a challenge. She was determined to study Chinese, despite the complicated logistics of taking a language consortium class at the Sidney School. Mastering a particularly difficult language interests Tracey. She says, "I just don't like limiting myself. I know I do better when I'm faced with something difficult, and I don't mind the learning curve." Her Chinese teacher compliments Tracey on "very good listening and speaking skills, and excellent class work," though she reminds her to "keep practicing those characters!"

Given Tracey's intellect and temperament, it isn't surprising that she began her Junior year in regular Physics, felt she needed a greater challenge, and talked her way into the AP class in the second quarter. She was warned that moving up would require a great deal of dedication to physics, given that she had to master current material as she caught up on the work she had already missed. Her AP Physics teacher says dryly, "To say this was an unusual year in science for Tracey would be an understatement. I hope she feels, as I do, that she accomplished a great deal, and that the year has been a success." Tracey was pleased to earn a 5 on the AP exam.

Tracey's summers are filled with crew camps and competitions. A year ago, for example, she competed at the National Championships and at the Canadian Henley International. She is also Senior co-captain of the cross-country team. She has also for two years been a counselor at a nearby adventure-camp program, teaching younger students to climb, hike, and raft Year-round, Tracey works on art projects: in Advanced Drawing her

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work was "excellent." Tracey will make her mark at her chosen college. She has our unqualified support and very strong recommendation.

Cantor School Transcript

Grade 9	Sem1	Sem2/Fin		Grade 10	Sem1/Sem2/Fin		
English	B+	B+	B+	English	B+	A-	A-
Chinese I	A-	B+	A-	Chinese II	B+	B+	B+
Accel Geom	B	B	B	Alg2/Trig	A-	A-	A-
World Hist IIC	B+	A-	A-	Geography	B	B+	B
Biology	B+	A-	A-	Chemistry	B	A-	B+
				Drawing	B+		

Grade 11	Sem1/Sem2/Fin			Grade 12	Sem1/Sem2/Fin
Found Am Lit	A			Comp Lit I	B+
Travel Narr	B+			AP Calc AB	B+
Chinese III	B-	B+	B+	AP E. Hist	A
Precalc	B+	A-	B+	AP Phy. C	A-
AP US History	B+	B+	B+	Religion	B+
AP Physics B	B-	B+	B	Adv Draw	A

Teacher Recommendation 1

I am delighted to write this letter of recommendation for Tracey Eckham. I was Sophomore Dean when Tracey was a sophomore and Junior Dean when Tracey was a junior, and I have gotten to know her quite well over the past three years. She is full of talent and promise, and I recommend her to you with enthusiasm.

First and foremost, Tracey is smart. Her grades attest to her prowess in the classroom, but they only tell half the story. Tracey is the kind of person who pursues her interest and accomplishes what she sets out to do. For example, Tracey is interested in writing and consequently received the Writer's Prize for Creative Writing. She loves science and added AP Physics B several months into her junior year and then received a 5 on the AP. She is currently taking AP Physics C and is enjoying it immensely. Likewise, Tracey pursued Chinese, which is only offered at Sidney (a member of our consortium of schools).

Tracey has also been a student of mine her sophomore year in Algebra 2/Trigonometry (accelerated) and is currently in my AB Calculus AP class. In the classroom, Tracey takes learning in stride. She listens, absorbs quickly and moves on to the next concept. I frequently select her to solve the problem for homework, she generally comes up with a creative solution as she approaches the problem with a fresh look. Tracey is fully able to recall ideas from other courses and can integrate them effectively into current material. Her strong foundation in physics serves her well in calculus.

Tracey's favorite activity is crew; she loves being on the water. She has been on the Varsity crew team for the last 3 years (the only senior who has done this in crew). She received the Coach's Award Freshman Year, competed nationally and internationally, was part of All Metro #1 boat junior year, ranked third in cross-country, and placed first in the area for two years in a row. She is also Captain of the Cross-Country Team.

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Tracey describes herself as independent, relaxed, and unique; I concur. One of her special traits is how mellow she is. Few students, who are as busy as she, have such grace under pressure. Tracey has integrity; she is well known as an academician; and she is an excellent athlete. Tracey receives my strongest recommendation.

No basis		Below average	Average	Good (above average)	Very Good (well above average)	Excellent (top 10%)	Outstanding (top 5%)	One of the top few I've encountered in my career. (top 1%)
	Academic achievement							
	Intellectual promise							
	Quality of writing							
	Creative, original thought							
	Productive class discussion							
	Respect accorded by faculty							
	Disciplined work habits							
	Maturity							
	Motivation							
	Leadership							
	Integrity							
	Reaction to setbacks							
	Concern for others							
	Self-confidence							
	Initiative, independence							
	OVERALL							

School policy prohibits the use of checkboxes.

Teacher Recommendation 2

It is a very great pleasure to write on behalf of Tracey Eckham who was my student in 9th grade World History, who has been my advisee since 10th grade, and who is currently taking my AP European History course as a senior. Knowing Tracey and her parents very well as I do, I can feel very confident in recommending Tracey in the highest possible terms as a very bright student with a first-rate mind and also as a person who has shown tremendous determination and grit in all four years of upper school crew, which has been her major area of commitment outside of academics.

Tracey stood out in many ways as a 9th grade history student. The area assigned to her and her partner for her year-long project was the Middle East. She became interested in

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the plight of the Kurds and brought in many weekly news stories on this subject. She did her term paper on a Kurdist terrorist who was finally arrested and tried in Turkey and became an expert on him. Her paper turned out very well. Tracey is now an excellent writer, as is clearly evident from her last two papers turned into me thus far in AP European History. She has a very clear style; her essays are very well organized and supported. But what really sets her apart from other students is the quality and originality of her thinking. Tracey is a very independent thinker who often approaches an issue from an unusual angle. Her logic is very impressive and her evidence is compelling as well. Tracey is that rare student nowadays who is a reader who reads for pleasure, often choosing very demanding philosophical works like those of the French existentialists. She has deep interests and may have the makings of a real scholar. When she gets really interested in something like the Kurds, she really goes the whole hog! Another interest which sets Tracey apart has been her dedication to the study of the Chinese language which she has continued since 9th grade. Very few US kids have this great advantage; it is a great asset which I am sure she will use in college and thereafter. Tracey is multi-talented; she won an award for creative writing and is also an excellent artist who has considerable talent. She definitely marches to her own drummer, however, and has to be deeply engaged in projects of her own choosing. A lot of very difficult concepts in science come easily to her. Last year, she was placed in a far too easy science section. After intervention on my part as her advisor, she was placed in a really difficult advanced section at a great disadvantage from having started late, etc. That is the kind of challenge that really gets Tracey fired up and she definitely rose to the occasion, finishing the course in a very strong fashion. One final example: having taken only the second half of the normal world history curriculum, Tracey elected to take the achievement test which covered the whole course. She did really well—an amazing accomplishment. Tracey IS really brilliant and would flourish in a very challenging college environment, especially with a lot of freedom to choose her courses.

Tracey's biggest commitment outside of academics at Cantor has been to the crew team. I have read the coach's comments over the past years—and she is truly an excellent coach. They have been incredibly positive. Tracey has gained so much self-confidence, skill, strength, and pride from this sport. It has literally been a life-transforming experience for her. Her achievements speak for themselves and are truly remarkable. I have been teaching for thirty-six years now and I have NEVER seen a student work harder at the sport. I used to really worry about the raw state of her hands several years ago, but she has managed to cope with every difficulty and challenge. Her posture and upper body strength have visibly benefited from her many, many hours of hard work. It has helped form her character in so many ways. She is a gentle and patient person, rather soft spoken, and naturally good with small children. I would like to see her devote a lot more time to her art—I found her 9th grade work very promising. She has managed to find some time to pursue it, but I hope she can develop her considerable talent much more fully in college.

Tracey is a genuinely independent thinker and a resolute individualist. She has a very strong will, as her dedication to crew clearly demonstrates. She prides herself on her uniqueness and creativity, but is not overbearing about it. She demands to be taken seriously and to be accepted for who she is, which has made her a bit of a loner. Living pretty far away from school has not made her social situation an easy one. However, she has a very warm and supportive family and has received a lot intellectual stimulation at home. Her father is a headmaster and a remarkable man himself. She resembles him a lot. Tracey is not a follower and does what she thinks is right. However, despite being such a maverick in some ways, she was able to commit herself so totally to crew which is so much a team sport.

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I believe that Tracey is a rather remarkable kid in her fierce determination to truly be herself and not worry about being popular. Cantor kids do respect her and do accept her for who she is.

In conclusion, I recommend Tracey Eckham as a brilliant student with great potential and as a very determined and unique individual with many talents and true grit.

No basis		Below average	Average	Good (above average)	Very Good (well above average)	Excellent (top 10%)	Outstanding (top 5%)	One of the top few I've encountered in my career. (top 1%)
	Academic achievement							
	Intellectual promise							
	Quality of writing							
	Creative, original thought							
	Productive class discussion							
	Respect accorded by faculty							
	Disciplined work habits							
	Maturity							
	Motivation							
	Leadership							
	Integrity							
	Reaction to setbacks							
	Concern for others							
	Self-confidence							
	Initiative, independence							
	OVERALL							

School policy prohibits the use of checkboxes.

Teacher Recommendation 3

I have been Tracey's rowing coach for over two years now, and although two years seem a short time, we often joke that given our rigorous November through June practice schedule—we meet five and six days a week, at least two hours at a time—I see Tracey more than her parents do at home. My exposure to and understanding of Tracey is even stronger than it is for some of her teammates, since Tracey is in the habit of arriving early and staying late for practice, squeezing in extra stretching beforehand and additional meters or miles when the rest go home. Tracey is one dedicated athlete. She is my only senior oarswoman

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who has been in the first varsity eight since the day she graduated from the novice program, and this year in winter training she is our clear leader, in both commitment and scoring.

For the last two seasons Tracey has been sitting in a bow seat, balancing and powering the boat as our front wheel drive, the first across the line in a series of medal-winning championship races. Tracey is terrific in that position, my first choice for that important seat. But ever ambitious, Tracey has her mind set on stroking the boat, on being the first in line leading all the rowers in intensity and form, rating and rhythm. To that end, Tracey and I regularly discuss her rowing technique and the small tweaks she can make to be the technical leader of the boat. Eager to improve and tough enough to take criticism, Tracey readily receives and incorporates constructive feedback. That said, I find myself giving Tracey less of it than she craves, coaching her with fewer directions than I give some of the other girls, in part because she is already extremely motivated to perform, holding herself to extremely high standards. My challenge as a coach is to get her to relax, to turn down her anxiety and her psychoanalysis of whether she is the best or not while her body carries out what she has trained herself to be able to do in her sleep. Tracey is no extrovert but rather the quietly driven leader-by-example, the lone wolf whom no one fully comprehends but whom the whole team respects, admires, and wants in their boat.

Tracey and I talk the most when we do long runs together during the winter training sessions, and I find her to be philosophical, humble, and kind. She weighs her words carefully before she speaks, and she considers other people generously, as if she is perhaps observing them wistfully from a ship where she can see them and their larger horizons, but wouldn't presume to know their true or more elusive selves. My sense is that she is wise, and from her sleeping and eating patterns, maybe a little depressed, and yet she is also determined to pull herself along and do the maximum that her considerable talents will allow. Tracey is particularly close with her father, who once rowed on the lightweight national team and now overextends himself by serving as principal of an independent middle school and president of our super-active crew council. For you to understand Tracey, I ought to note, respectfully, that Tracey and her dad really carry the family: Tracey's younger brother has big trouble with depression, bouncing from school to school when he can get out of bed, and Tracey's mom is a nice but nervous woman with a squeaky presence, uncertain in conversation, and frightened in public. That Tracey is the pleasant and productive young woman she is within these and other privately tough familial circumstances says loads about her ability to keep her focus, shoulder responsibility, and be independent.

Finally, I want to say that I appreciate Tracey as a caring young friend, not simply as a skilled athlete in our ranks. On a personal level, Tracey was kindly supportive of me last year when I lost my brother in a boating accident: she flew up to New York to attend his memorial service and quietly helped get one of our team's new racing hulls named after my brother, a man she has never met. Tracey acted, I believe, out of compassion, as well as a sharp understanding of what family is supposed to mean. I recommend her highly and hope that you will recognize and honor the progress she has already worked so hard to produce as a student and an athlete. In my view, Tracey has truly earned the privilege of a first-rate education. Thanks for considering her.

Athletic Rating

Tracey is highly recruited by the crew team. She would contribute immediately and would be a fantastic addition to the team. She is one of our top recruits this year.

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Tracey Eckham—Alumni Interview Report

Academic (3+)
Good grades and mid 600 to low 700 scores
Love of Learning—'fair'
Intellectual Curiosity—'fair'

Extracurricular, Athletic, Community, Employment, Family Commitments (2+)
Local or regional recognition; major accomplishment(s).

Personal Qualities (3/3+)
Above average personal appeal and character
Openness to new ideas and new people—'good'
Contribution to college life—'fair'
What kind of roommate would this student be?—'fair'

Overall (3+)
Strong candidate

Additional Comments

There are times when I believe that my interview report will contribute a great deal to the understanding of an applicant's personality, intellect, fitness for Harvard, etc., times when I am bowled over by a student's intellectual curiosity or passion, and other times, when I think my report will be less useful, when I am dulled by a student's intellectual tepidness. Alas, I suspect that this report will fall into the latter category.

Tracey Eckham is a young woman who seems bright enough, well-rounded in her interests—from physics to poetry to art to rowing crew competitively, and perfectly pleasant and unobjectionable in her manner and presentation. For me, however, there appeared to be a lack of a spark or enthusiasm or any particularly compelling or appealing quality. Tracey made a weak, limp impression on me, and, while she may be academically qualified for Harvard, and may be an asset to the women's crew team (for which, I understand, she is being recruited), I am not able to recommend Tracey for admission.

Tracey's academic performance seems good, if not stellar—low 700s on her SAT Is and high 700s on her SAT IIs, and good grades. In our conversation, she verbalized an interest in academic and intellectual things—switching from general physics to AP physics half-way through the semester (because she wanted to be challenged among other reasons), enrolling in Physics C after completing Physics B because she enjoyed the in-depth study of certain aspects of physics, setting up an independent study on "existential writing" to explore themes present in existentialist texts, and spending three years studying Chinese. However, none of these discussions or descriptions seemed to have any deep interest or intellectual satisfaction behind them.

Tracey expressed an interest in writing, and explains that she submits some of her poetry for the school literary magazine, and that she won the award for her class for writing. But again, this description was bland and almost disinterested. She also expressed

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enjoyment of art, although she gave up her art class when she switched physics classes last year.

Tracey spent five summers as a counselor at an adventure day camp held on the campus of a local school at which her father is headmaster. She learned to rock climb as a camper at the camp, and now teaches rock climbing there, although she does not engage in the activity except for the time she spends at camp. She spent the summer after her sophomore year rowing crew on a club team, and competing in various races. She has been on varsity crew for four years, and expects to continue rowing throughout college. This may be the most notable thing about Tracy, although again, her discussion of crew is limited and uncompelling.

Tracey's affect is muted and sort of quiet. Whether she was talking about her high school, her family, books she's read, art, or rowing, there is a lack of any great zest for life or strength of interest. Perhaps that is just a superficial personality characteristic, but I was unable to engage Tracey in any sort of intellectual conversation of any substance, and did not perceive that Tracey would add much as a classmate at Harvard.

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Mandisi Botlhoko

School: International School
Description: Selective international school in Africa, many ethnicities represented, majority of students go on to University
Nationality: Botswana
Citizenship: F-1 Student
First language/primary language spoken at home: Setswana

Mother:	Maid or housekeeping cleaner	**Father:**	Deceased
Education:	None	**Education:**	None

Siblings: Mandla (24)

Tentative field of study: Social Sciences
Commitment: 1 (1-5 scale: 1, absolutely certain; 5, undecided)
Intended occupation: Health (Non-Medical)
Commitment: 1 (1-5 scale: 1, absolutely certain; 5, undecided)
College activities: Track, Cross-Country; Social Service
Commitment: 2 (1-5 scale: 1, absolutely certain; 5, undecided)

Class rank: Top 10/120

SAT:	460/650/520		
SAT subject tests:	750 Math II	710 Chemistry	700 Physics

Extracurricular Activities:
Culture Club (11)
Secretary
3hrs/wk

Athletics:
Cross-country (10-12)
Captain
10hrs/wk
JV/Varsity Soccer (11-12)
3hrs/wk

Employment:

Academic Honors:

School Commendation for Achievement (11 & 12)

Short Answer (most meaningful activity)

It was not until late last year that I fully understood the impact of the AIDS pandemic in Botswana. Through the first aid training program offered at school, I learnt and discovered a number of shocking facts about the effect of AIDS in Botswana. This activity, for the rather short duration it lasted, had a significant and long-lasting effect on my character and on the way I hope to contribute to my community in the future. I also learnt other practical skills during our first aid training program, and in May this year, I was able to

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administer CPR to a soccer player who had collapsed in the middle of a game when no one else could think of doing it. I take great satisfaction in the knowledge that I may have saved another person's life.

Additional Information

Even though I have been told several times that there is nothing I can do to change the current situation in Botswana socially and politically, I still believe that something can be done to make things better not only in Botswana but in Africa as a whole. The main reason I seek after quality higher education is to acquire the necessary skills to be able to address such issues. I want to prove every one who thinks the current situation in Africa is permanent, wrong.

I feel that one can not just expect to get everything from society without giving something back. So, as much as I want to gain knowledge, I also want to share what I have with the community I will be living in for the next four years or more. Whereas in the past I used to believe that there is no way in which anyone who is financially unstable can give back to society, I now know that a person can in fact be productive in a number of ways.

(Mailed Fee Waiver Request)

Personal Statement

I was never discouraged by the fact that I came from an economically-disadvantaged family. My father had been employed as a miner in South Africa until he was diagnosed with Autoimmune Multiple Endocrine Failure and consequently sent home. I was in primary school then. As he was no longer earning a wage, he was only able to keep us in school for the next years and I would have dropped out of school except that I was ready to do anything to stay in school. I remember one day in Form 2 where the Principal was sending home everyone whose fees had not been paid and I was one of them. I could not leave the class when I was told to; I cried and obstinately held on to my desk because I understood that without education, none of my dreams would ever come true. Some teachers were touched by this and they offered to pay my fees for that year. Then I heard about a certain organization which paid my school fees until my completion year—a year after which my father passed away. I later realized, however, that education was broader than just being in a classroom.

I always worked very hard during the day at school for I usually did not get the chance to do so at home where candles were only occasionally available. With hard work, I was always at the top in my class and the school as a whole. This is why the very same year I was supposed to drop out of school, I came first in my class and I was commended for academic excellence. Through the help of the St. Augustine de John Bursary Fund, I completed secondary school three years later, where I obtained the second best O-level aggregate in the country. I look back at these days with pride as they always remind me of my determination, self-discipline and many of life's lessons I learnt during this time. For example, I had had to work during the holidays in order to have money for bus fare. I would ask to clean someone's home for a small payment which I would reserve for bus fare. There were times when I would go to school on an empty stomach and with no pocket money and even though I starved for days at times, I never gave up on school. To be successful in life, I always told myself, required one to make sacrifices.

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The two years I have spent at International School have been the most crucial in building the person I am today. It is here that I have had the opportunity to participate in extra-curricular activities both within and outside of school. This is where I became aware that the education experience extends beyond the classroom. During my first year of IB, I partook in the culture club where I was elected for the secretarial position. I was responsible for organizing meetings and venues and noting important discussion points raised in meetings. In the process of sharing my culture and view of life, I got the chance to learn a lot from the different nationalities and cultural backgrounds we had in the club. I learnt, for example, to view life issues from a slightly broader perspective in order to accommodate people from all walks of life, something which I never had considered before. I also taught Botswanan national dances to a number of interested students for performances on the International Culture Day in our school. This did not stop me from taking part in sporting activities as well. I became one of the most dedicated athletes, and participated in a number of national races and one half-marathon race. Early in my final year, I was elected captain of the school athletics team where I was responsible for the organization of training sessions—a task that taught me a range of ways of dealing with people diverse in a number of respects.

The community service program also played a significant role in spurring the deepest passions of service in me. I realized that I could in fact give back to the society in a number of ways. Consequently, I voluntarily took the task of visiting students on behalf of the St. Augustine de John Bursary Fund and, due to the lack of publicity of such a helpful organization, I proposed to create a website for them (link included). This is a task I focused much on during term breaks. Also, during this time I offered mathematics and science study/help sessions at my former secondary school and other surrounding community schools. Because of my interest in the sciences, I joined the 'Healthy Senses' community service project. Here, as students we go around local primary schools and perform screens on children to ensure that they are in a good state to learn. I was also involved in a first aid training program in our school. It was quite an experience for me, especially because the lessons were mostly about caring for the HIV positive, which is one of Botswana's primary concerns.

Over the years, I have learnt a lot from the people I have lived with and I have developed a number of qualities I pride myself in. My family background in particular has been one motivational factor to my academic progress. It serves as a perpetual reminder that I have to work hard in order to improve the lives of the people back home. I have come to realize, however, that to be able to do that, one needs the appropriate armor, which is an informed mind.

Additional Essay: An Unusual Circumstance in My Life

My father was sick for the first five years of my secondary school education. Because of his medical condition he was functionally paralyzed. I was in primary school when he fell sick and, because I still had a long way, my parents thought it was economical to have me drop out of school and let my older brother continue as he was half-way through with his secondary school education. They tried to explain their reasoning to me but I could not understand anything except that I thought they liked my brother better. However, I did find help on my own and it is because of that assistance that I am here today. I am neither angry at my mother nor upset with my brother because I can understand now. I sometimes feel I should be grateful I went through this, because although it was a difficult time for me, I learnt a lot from this experience.

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For Students Applying From School Outside the U.S. and Canada:
What specific plans to you have, if any, for using the education you hope to receive?

I do not wish to see any family or anyone go through what I went through. My education will not only be of worth to me, but also, to the many people out there who have not had the opportunity to receive an education. I feel that I need to work hard for the betterment of the many disadvantaged lives, not just here in Botswana but in Africa as a whole. More than anything, I am keen to join forces with the world in fighting socio-economic crises which affect everyone in this world.

Secondary School Report

Mandisi joined International School last year with some of the best O level results in the whole of Botswana. He was selected by the International School Botswana National Committee in a highly selective process and he has proved to be an excellent choice. I have never taught him but feel that I know him well as he has been very thoughtful, engaging and proactive in the University application process. Mandisi has a total predicated score of 42 IB diploma points which ranks him in the top 10 of this talented cohort of students.

His teachers are consistent and unanimous in their high praise of his ability, approach and personality. He has excellent powers of analysis and synthesis and his levels of motivation are second to none. He has truly made the most of his academic experience here relishing his first experience in the science laboratories and in the ICT centre. Indeed his IT skills are now so well advanced that he was commissioned by a local voluntary group that had sponsored his high school education to design a website for them to attract more donors. This is a perfect example of how prepared he is to "give back" and do something meaningful with his talents.

Mandisi is a fine athlete, particularly a long distance runner, where his exceptional dedication and perseverance coupled with his natural fitness have seen him compete strongly in both domestic and international half marathons. His community service project has involved testing the vision of local primary school children—a role that he has performed with great diligence and commitment. Mandisi is a selfless character who in his own unassuming style has really contributed much to both the International School community as well as his own highly impoverished rural community in Botswana.

We recommend him warmly for the most selective of colleges for both his academic potential and quality personality. He is one of our most deserving students.

IB Results

Subject	Predicted	Actual
Setswana A1 EE	A	A
Setswana A1 SL	7	6
English A2 SL	7	7
ITGS SL in English	6	6
Chemistry HL in English	6	6
Physics HL in English	7	7
Maths. Sets HL in English	6	4
Theory Knowl in English	B	B

O-Level Results

Subject	Grade
English Lang	A
Setswana	A
Mathematics	A
Additional Maths	A
Agriculture	A
Biology	A
Science (Chem, Phys)	A
Commerce	A

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Grades

7 Excellent	3 Mediocre
6 Very Good	2 Poor
5 Good	1 Very Poor
4 Satisfactory	N No Grade Awarded

Teacher Recommendation 1

I have been Mandisi's teacher for Higher Mathematics since he won a bursary to study here on the International Baccalaureate Diploma programme two years ago.

Mandisi's life story is one of faith and overcoming adversity. After losing his father soon after starting secondary school, often going hungry and not having light to work by in the evenings, Mandisi proved himself by coming top in his class. He was supported by the St. Augustine de John Society and eventually won one of a handful of funded places available at International School, from literally hundreds of applicants.

Our decision to take him as been absolutely justified. Mandisi could realistically achieve a diploma score of 40 points. In Mathematics, he has always shown excellent technique, thorough recall and confident ability to tackle unfamiliar problems. He is, of course, hardworking and tenacious. He contributes helpfully to question and answer discussions in class and has enjoyed the sometimes philosophical forays we have made into the fundamentals of abstract Mathematics.

Character-wise, Mandisi has been shaped equally by hardship and love. He truly values all the support he has been shown and given in recent years. Crucially however, he shows his appreciation through action. As soon as he had the capacity and opportunity to help others, he did so. He travelled by bus around Botswana to visit and monitor other students being supported by the St. Augustine de John Society. He volunteered to teach Maths at a neighboring High School and immediately gained a reputation as a "very good teacher." On International School's Community Service programme, he has taken a major interest in our Healthy Senses project to test and assist children at rural schools around the country. As well as weekly school visits, he played a major part in fund-raising by organising a team to take part in a sponsored run. Mandisi himself is a very good athlete, having taken part in a half-marathon and organised training for the school athletics team (which he captained).

Mandisi's commitment is "to work hard to improve the lives of the people back home." He well-knows that Botswana is ravaged by HIV/AIDS and that he could well be one of the people who could do most about it for future generations. He is quiet and humble yet ambitious to get things done, rather than being ambitious for himself.

With his excellent personal qualities, Mandisi will adapt readily to student life in another country. He will give at least as much as he takes. He is a very able student, utterly reliable and one whom I recommend highly.

No basis		Below average	Average	Good (above average)	Very Good (well above average)	Excellent (top 10%)	Outstanding (top 5%)	One of the top few I've encountered in my career. (top 1%)
	Academic achievement					X		

Botlhoko 5

	Intellectual promise					X		
	Quality of writing			X				
	Creative, original thought				X			
	Productive class discussion				X			
	Respect accorded by faculty					X		
	Disciplined work habits						X	
	Maturity						X	
	Motivation						X	
	Leadership				X			
	Integrity						X	
	Reaction to setbacks						X	
	Concern for others						X	
	Self-confidence					X		
	Initiative, independence						X	
	OVERALL						X	

Teacher Recommendation 2

Mandisi has a mature approach to his work and an enquiring mind which doesn't allow him to settle for a less than complete understanding of any topic. He works methodically and pays attention to detail and the quality of his written work is very high. His dry sense of humor has entertained us in many a class.

Mandisi completed a website for a local charity organisation, the Augustine de John bursury fund, as his ITGS project. The fund supplies bursaries for students to undertake secondary education studies. During this process he needed to consult with the organisation to gather information about the organisation and the requirements for the website. The comments I had back from the organisation were about how impressed they were with the professional approach Mandisi took to the whole process. The final outcome was a testament to Mandisi's good work ethic and displayed both his technical skill and his ability to manage a project of this kind.

Mandisi's commitment to giving back to his community is also evident in the many community service projects he has undertaken, both through the school and of his own volition. He has been employed as a teacher at his former school and has given reading and mathematics classes to various groups. His commitment to furthering the understanding of his cultural beliefs and practices within the school is also commendable as he has taken part in traditional dancing and organised Botswanan evenings in the hostel. He is also a talented runner over long distances and a soccer player.

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Mandisi is a proud and very capable young man, committed to making the best of the opportunities that he is given. I am sure that he will continue to excel academically, in the sporting arena and, most importantly, in the way that he gives back to the community from which he came and who have supported him through the years.

No basis		Below average	Average	Good (above average)	Very Good (well above average)	Excellent (top 10%)	Outstanding (top 5%)	One of the top few I've encountered in my career. (top 1%)
	Academic achievement						X	
	Intellectual promise						X	
	Quality of writing					X		
	Creative, original thought				X			
	Productive class discussion				X			
	Respect accorded by faculty						X	
	Disciplined work habits					X		
	Maturity						X	
	Motivation						X	
	Leadership					X		
	Integrity					X		
	Reaction to setbacks					X		
	Concern for others				X			
	Self-confidence						X	
	Initiative, independence						X	
	OVERALL						X	

Admissions Officer Interview Report

Personal Qualities (2)
Strong personal appeal and character

Overall (3+)
Strong candidate

Of the ten impressive students I interviewed here, Mandisi had the greatest depth and substance. Very mature, thoughtful and grateful for the opportunities he's been given. He told me a heart-wrenching story about his family's inability to pay his school fees and the

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day that he was to be removed from the school. He held on his desk so tightly that they couldn't carry him out and cried so hard that his teachers took pity on him and pitched in to pay his fees. What did his schooling cost for a year?...Somewhere around $4. While M. may initially be a bit dismayed to learn that people routinely pay $4 for a cup of coffee, he knows his teachers effectively saved his life, and he seems all about giving back and demonstrating his gratitude through his actions.

Without education, he might well have ended up like his dad who worked in a mine in South Africa and died a painful death as a result of the substances to which he had been exposed at work. Typical of the local community, he has many "relations" --- half-siblings, vaguely related cousins. While he was not critical of anyone, it's clear that he has set out on a different path, one that places emphasis on education and responsibility. Although he is not his mother's oldest son, he appears to be the child most attentive and supportive.

While he is a few years older than most of his classmates, he looks younger—probably the result of substandard nutrition. He apparently is a good runner, and his leadership skills led to his election as team captain. He ran a half marathon in 95 minutes at altitude, so I would think he could walk on to our cross-country team, and the track team would provide a nice "family" for him.

Some might balk at his verbal score, but I doubt this fellow had a single book written in English in his home growing up. He is predicted to get a top score on his IB exam, and he was very articulate in conversation.

I really liked and admired Mandisi. I think he would add a great deal to his classmates, who have probably never envisioned that $4 could so determine the trajectory of a life. There's no question in my mind that he would use his education to the benefit of many others and could emerge as a real leader and a force for good.

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Carrie Miller

School: Cherokee High School
Description: Large suburban public high school, 92% go onto college (74% to four year colleges)
Ethnicity: Caucasian

Mother: Social worker
College: B.A. from public university

Father: Television editor
College: B.A. from public university

Siblings: Stephen (27), James (23)—both at another Ivy League institution

Tentative field of study: Social Studies
Commitment: 2 (1-5 scale: 1, absolutely certain; 5, undecided)
Intended occupation: Communications (Media, Film, Advertising, Journalism)
Commitment: 2 (1-5 scale: 1, absolutely certain; 5, undecided)
College activities: Arts, Visual Arts; Dance
Commitment: 2 (1-5 scale: 1, absolutely certain; 5, undecided)

Class rank: does not rank/630 (4.43/4.5 GPA)
SAT I: 670/620/720
600/660/750
640/630/640
SAT II: 710 Biology 660 Math I 580 World History 670 U.S. History

Extracurricular Activities:
Documentary Filmmaking (9-12)
10 hrs/wk, 48 wks/yr
Researched, produced, wrote & edited
4 award-winning documentaries
Campaign for Young Adult Involvement (11-12)
2 hrs/wk, 50 wks/yr
Caucus member, youth council member
County Youth Council (12)
2 hrs/wk, 42 wks/yr
Advise county exec. & develop legislative agenda
School Newspaper (9-12)
5 hrs/wk, 42 wks/yr
Head copy ed, opinions ed, columnist
Ballet (9-12)
4 hrs/wk, 52 wks/yr
Oboist (9-12)
6 hrs/wk, 40 wks/yr
Orchestra, wind ensemble
School Grading Subcommittee (10-11)
1 hr/wk, 24 wks/yr

Work Experience
Ice cream server/cashier (11-present)
16 hrs/wk, summer & school year
Freelance videographer (10-present)
3 hrs/wk, summer & school year
Flower clerk
16 hrs/wk, summer

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Academic Honors:

3rd place winner, National History Day
6th place ntl. finalist National History Day
1st place Chicago Film Fest (Youth)
New England Rep at anniversary webcast
Film catalogued at Modern Art Film Study Cnt.

Advanced Placement Test Results:

World History	4
U.S. History	4
Biology	4
Eng. Lang. & Comp.	3

Short essay (most meaningful activity)

For the past six years, I have been taking a two-hour ballet class every Tuesday and Wednesday night. I enjoy ballet because the intense concentration that proper technique requires helps me to relax. From the moment I begin putting on my tights and leotard, I can feel my mind clearing itself of the day's events. By the time I enter class, I am in my "ballet world" where I can connect with my body and rejuvenate my mind. The application of proper technique has taught me a lot about how the human body moves and has helped me respect my body and keep it strong and healthy. After class is over, my improved physical and mental well-being stays with me outside the studio. I hope to continue dancing in college and to explore different forms of dance through the on-campus, student-run dance groups.

Personal Statement

I sat in a tiny apartment in Brooklyn, riveted by Albert Montag's story. It was November many decades later, but his vivid memories pulled me back to August 1968. "The police lost control," he told me. "I held up my press pass, yelling 'Press! Press! Press!' and the more I yelled, the harder they hit." He was a reporter covering the Democratic National Convention in Chicago when violence broke out between anti-war protestors and police. It was impossible to understand why anyone, especially an officer of the law, would want to hurt the frail man who sat in front of me. I was horrified, but I also felt a rush of excitement. It was the excitement I get from being catapulted back in time, to live in a moment from the past as if I were there. And I knew I'd be able to share that moment, because I was capturing it all on video.

I have been making historical documentaries for five years. It was during the production of my third film, while screening archival footage of the 1968 convention, that I first saw Mr. Montag. He lay in a bed, bandaged and bloodied after the beating, and when a reporter asked his name, I wrote it down. Then I thought, what if I could find this guy and interview him today, more than 30 years later? So armed with his name and Google, I set out to find Mr. Montag. As it turned out, he lived in New York and agreed to meet me.

By the time of the interview, I had already read books, newspaper accounts and magazine articles. I interviewed a college professor who was an expert on the era and screened hours upon hours of archival news footage. I was confident that I was well prepared. I wasn't prepared, however, for how angry Mr. Montag's story would make me feel. I couldn't stop thinking about it. I wanted to find a police officer who was there and confront him with what I'd heard. So, I contacted police associations in Chicago and was put in touch with David Griffin, a retired Chicago police officer who was involved in the so-called police riot. However, when we spoke, he painted just as vivid a picture as Mr. Montag had, only he described being taunted by the crowd, having bricks and even bags of human

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feces hurled at him. "We didn't riot," insisted Mr. Griffin. He said the police believed they were under attack, and acted to protect themselves.

After those two interviews, I couldn't decide who was right or who was wrong, but I did know I would never again rely only on books or even experts to get my information. Mr. Montag and Mr. Griffin had dropped me in the middle of a riot, and suddenly, I felt like history was alive.

In my subsequent films, I interviewed as many people as possible who could provide first-hand accounts. These individuals, and their experiences, give my films something my other research cannot. They give the viewer a connection. Nothing is more powerful than seeing a soldier's face as he describes how he lost his leg, or listening to a reporter describe a piece of history he witnessed. Without that emotional connection, history can seem distant and irrelevant.

I hope that when people watch my documentaries, they not only learn something, but feel something. Working on my films has taught me about the importance of preserving history. Conducting these interviews has helped me to see that everyone is a part of history, and everyone has a story. Sharing these stories through my documentaries gives me the chance to be a part of the process of keeping history alive.

Additional Essay

Starting in eleventh grade, I joined the Campaign for Young Adult Involvement (CFYAI). What convinced me to join CFYAI was that, unlike other community service activities I have been involved in, CFYAI's youth members came up with all the project ideas and made all the decisions. Everyone was encouraged to voice his or her opinion. Last year we developed a workshop to educate middle school students about the negative consequences of cliques. In this collaborative atmosphere, I began to see a change in myself. I was never an outspoken person, but now I was contributing ideas and steering discussions. My approach to the world was changing too, but I would realize how until, a few months later, I began serving ice cream.

Last summer, I started working at an ice cream store. One night, an hour before closing, the store suddenly emptied out. Normally, I would welcome the break, but there was a problem: my co-worker hadn't shown up and I was alone. Someone driving into the shopping center would see one open store, a small redhead, and a cash register. This did not sit well with me. When I spoke to my boss, she promised it wouldn't happen again. It did.

Over the next few weeks, I had three realizations. First, my complaint might never be addressed. Second, this might be because there were no regulations at the ice cream store regarding minors working alone at night. And third, what if this problem went beyond the ice cream store and me? I did some research and discovered I was right. There were no such regulations anywhere.

When I returned to CFYAI in the fall, I presented my findings as a possible topic for the year's project. Believing that this was beyond the program's scope, CFYAI's advisors redirected me to the County Youth Council, a group of teenagers that acts as an advisory committee to the County Executive. Each year, the council builds a legislative agenda addressing a pressing issue among youth in the county and presents it to the County Executive. I applied for a seat on the council and was accepted. Combining my research with my personal experience, I developed a presentation and successfully convinced the council members that this year's focus should be safety for minors in the workplace.

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When my proposal was accepted, I felt a strong sense of accomplishment, but more importantly, I felt empowered. I realized that I had the ability to influence the organizations I interact with, from school committees, to the workplace, to local government. My experiences with CFYAI and Youth Council have enabled me to grow into a more outspoken, active person, and with this newfound confidence I have been able to look beyond myself and my own concerns and see the concerns of the broader community. The world will never be perfect, but I now see that if I speak up, I can work toward making it better.

Secondary School Report

It is a pleasure to write this letter on behalf of Carrie Miller, a truly outstanding young woman who has distinguished herself from her peers in many ways. As is evident from her transcript, Carrie is an exceptional student, maintaining an 'A' average (just shy of an A+!) in the most rigorous courses offered at our school. As opposed to those who easily earn such grades, Carrie truly works for each and every one. She is intellectually curious and actively engaged in her own learning, delving deep into material to go beyond what is being presented. Carrie is consistently prepared, an active participant in classroom discussions and can always be counted on to provide well thought out and substantiated written work. What is unusual is that Carrie is able to let these qualities shine through as she works every day to overcome an affliction called Sensory Integration Disorder.

Sensory Integration Disorder is a condition that exists when sensory signals do not get organized into appropriate responses, making it difficult to process and act upon information received through the senses. Carrie, for example, has difficulty with fine motor skills, visual tasks and attention and concentration. Carrie has learned to compensate for her deficits (for example, relying on the computer rather than her own handwriting to complete assignments), and has been able to realize her full potential as an accelerated and advanced placement student.

Carrie's SAT scores do not necessarily match her overall academic achievement; however, her standardized tests have traditionally not correlated with her classroom work and achievement. For example, when entering the middle school, Carrie participated in testing for entry into the accelerated program. Her scores did not automatically place her into the program; however suspecting that these scores were not indicative of her potential, Carrie's parents asked that she be placed in the program anyway. Carrie excelled in these advanced and enriched classes and has continued to do so. I have no doubt that Carrie has the ability, determination and analytical thinking to thrive in your academically demanding and dynamic environment. She will undoubtedly contribute positively to your classrooms and campus community. While her grades have been superior and all the more impressive due to her unique issues, it is her extracurricular pursuits that really set Carrie apart from her equally academically impressive peers.

Carrie's most notable achievement related to academics is her involvement in National History Day. She has participated in this program for the last five years, placing either first or second in the regional and state competitions four of the five years, qualifying her for the national level. Carrie's documentaries, in which she interviewed television journalists, college professors and individuals who lived through the events on which she reported, have earned her being recognized at this national level *three* times! In addition, her films have won documentary film awards in international film festivals and have been

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included in programs offered by The Muller Museum of Art, the City Public Library's Center for the Research of African-American Culture, and the Applebaum Museum of Art.

Another activity that distinguishes Carrie from her peers is her involvement with the County's Campaign for Young Adult Involvement (CFYAI), a community service learning program in which participants work together to develop workshops to education county youth about timely issues for adolescents. She recently collaborated on a program for middle school students about "cliques," including the effects and prevention, and helped develop a web site this summer called "clicks for cliques." Based on her participation, Carrie was asked to join the County Youth Board; while interning for the Board this summer, she worked on CFYAI recruitment and helped plan the annual fall retreat.

In addition to these two time consuming aspects of her life, Carrie has been a member of two important school district committees, in which she collaborated with administrators and parents while representing her fellow students on grading and ranking policies that affect the entire student body, and has worked as a Staff Writer, Opinions Editor and currently the Head Copy Editor of the school newspaper. She has held a part time job for the last two summers, the last of which she has continued into the fall. Carrie has developed excellent time management skills as she has balanced a demanding high school program with a plethora of time intensive extracurricular activities. I have no doubt she will continue to find this balance at the college level.

Carrie truly stands out amongst the students I have worked with in the past fifteen years and continues to serve as a role model for her peers as a student and young woman who contributes to the school and community in a meaningful way. As you strive to comprise a diverse class, I hope you will recognize Carrie's potential contribution!

I wholeheartedly recommend Carrie Miller!

Cherokee High School Transcript

Grade 9		**Grade 10**	
English 9 Pre-AP	A	English 10 Pre-AP	A
Cadet Band	A+	Computer Art & Design	A+
Spanish II Accelerated	A+	Band	A+
Math Course II Acc	A	Orchestra	A+
Project Science	A+	Spanish 3 Accelerated	A+
Biology Acc w/lab	A+	Math Course III Acc	A
Social Studies 9 Pre-AP	A	Chemistry w/lab	A+
Health	A+	Soc Stud 10 Honors AP	A
Phys Ed	A	Phys Ed	A-

Grade 11		**Grade 12**
English 11 AP	A	Fashion Mktg
Band	A+	Eng 13-AP
Orchestra	A+	Wind Ensemble
Spanish 4 Accelerated	A+	Spanish 13 AP
Precalculus Accelerated	A	AP Calc BC
Biology 13 AP	A+	Physics w/lab
Forensic Science	A+	Economics 12 AP
Soc Stud 11 AP	A	Government 12 AP
Phys Ed	A	Contemporary Issues

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Teacher Recommendation 1

It is my pleasure to recommend Carrie Miller to your up and coming undergraduate class. I first met Carrie in my Advanced Placement US History class during her junior year. However, I knew Carrie by reputation due to her long standing work in National History Day. Carrie is an excellent student with a sincere desire to live up to her highest potential. Carrie is an especially hard worker with an intellectual skill to match.

Early in the school year, Carrie expressed concern over every last detail of her study, often asking for constructive criticism in any way to help her improve her AP studies. Carrie dutifully came to extra help and put constructive criticism into practice. As the year progressed I watched her gain a stronger grasp on the material and participate in class confident of her knowledge in US History. This is evident when you examine Carrie's grades. She achieved college credit with a score of 4 on the Advanced Placement exam in US History and scored a 99 on the US History state examination.

Carrie's most significant contributions to her studies in history are her efforts in National History Day. She has won awards in all three years of her high school education as well as numerous international film festivals and has been exhibited at the Muller Museum in Philadelphia. I used one of her films when teaching a lesson on the Korean War. The students and I both learned a lot from her work.

Carrie's accomplishments in my class are even more noteworthy in that she balances her academics against a formidable extracurricular schedule. Carrie has made numerous contributions to the school newspaper, is an accomplished oboe player and has contributed a significant amount of her time toward community service by volunteering at the Campaign for Young Adult Involvement.

I highly recommend Carrie Miller to your freshman class. I believe other professors will find her to be as exceptional as I have found her.

No basis		Below average	Average	Good (above average)	Very Good (well above average)	Excellent (top 10%)	Outstanding (top 5%)	One of the top few I've encountered in my career. (top 1%)
	Creative, original thought						X	
	Motivation						X	
	Self-confidence						X	
	Independence, initiative							X
	Intellectual ability						X	
	Academic achievement						X	
	Written expression of ideas						X	
	Effective class discussion					X		

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	Disciplined work habits						X	
	Potential for growth						X	

Teacher Recommendation 2

It is with distinct pleasure that I take this opportunity to share with you my perception of Carrie Miller. Carrie was a student in my Advanced Placement English Language class as a junior last year, and she is currently enrolled in my AP English Literature class. These Advanced Placement courses are the most challenging English courses offered at Cherokee. In the language courses, students read both fiction and non-fiction, learning to examine rhetorical style, giving as much attention to a writer's technique as to his content. The course culminates in the Advanced Placement Examination in English Language and Composition, which challenges the students to analyze complex written passages for style and purpose, as well as to write their own rhetorical arguments. In the literature course, students are expected to engage in close analyses of higher-level literature, including Joyce, Shakespeare, and nineteenth and twentieth century poetry.

Carrie is one of the hardest working students I have taught in my twenty-year careers. By her own admission, English is not her strongest subject, but over the course of the last year, and continuing into this year, her growth as a critical thinker and writer has been impressive. Never one to be satisfied with mediocrity, Carrie has always insisted on knowing the "why" of each criticism I might make in an essay, and in the "how" of improving it. While she is, like any high-performing student, interested in improving her grade, I continue to be impressed by her intrinsic motivation to improve; Carrie demands excellence of herself and is willing to sacrifice in order to achieve it. This motivation manifested itself in her work on her final assignment of the year. As a culminating project in the AP Language class last year, the students chose a controversial topic, researched it, wrote an argument thesis, and then defended their thesis in a presentation to the class. Carrie chose to argue for a ban on processed sugar products. Rather than work on the project all in one weekend, Carrie came to my classroom after school on a regular basis, working through the project, making frequent revisions, and seeking advice, all to ensure that her paper and presentation were up to her standards. Not surprisingly, her paper and presentation were both among the finest in the class, and the A that Carrie achieved in that class was a testament, not only to her talent, but to her remarkable tenacity.

On a personal note, Carrie, with all of her innate ability and remarkable talents, is highly receptive to criticism and is always willing to learn. On more than one occasion, she has spent time after school simply to refine her understanding of difficult points. Her thirst for knowledge and her willingness to strive to achieve that knowledge make her a most deserving candidate. She will be a credit to any institution fortunate enough to receive her acceptance.

No basis		Below average	Average	Good (above average)	Very Good (well above average)	Excellent (top 10%)	Outstanding (top 5%)	One of the top few I've encountered in my career. (top 1%)

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	Creative, original thought						X	
	Motivation							X
	Self-confidence			X				
	Independence, initiative					X		
	Intellectual ability					X		
	Academic achievement						X	
	Written expression of ideas					X		
	Effective class discussion					X		
	Disciplined work habits							X
	Potential for growth						X	

Additional Letter of Recommendation

It is my absolute pleasure to write this letter of recommendation for Ms. Carrie Miller. For the past five years she has participated in the State and National History Day programs.

Over the several years, Carrie has produced stunning documentary films that showcase the in-depth research and analysis she conducted on her subject matter. Carrie's work has been recognized and honored nationally.

In June, I saw Carrie's documentary as she competed at the National History Day competition. Her film left me speechless. In ten short minutes, Carrie effectively demonstrated that a well-known film was a triumph of artistic filmmaking, yet also a tragedy for the racial bias and subsequent civil unrest it incited. In addition, her film editing, choice of music, and narration were impeccable; I hung on every work and every image, and I felt emotionally connected to her story.

With an annotated bibliography that spanned twenty-four pages, Carrie's project was well –researched. She effectively used period newspaper articles, film industry publications, the NAACP's newsletter, interviews with film historians, and journal articles on African-American and film history to develop and support her thesis. As I thumbed through her bibliography at the competition, I was amazed by the hard work and determination that Carrie's project embodied.

Carrie won third place in the nation for her documentary that year. I share this story with you for one simple reason. Carrie possesses talent and skills that I rarely saw from my classmates when I was an undergraduate history student. She has already developed the critical thinking, time-management, and organizational skills that she needs to succeed at a highly selective university. Moreover, she is a self-starter, is highly motivated and, in short, embodies every quality that should make her an exemplary candidate for enrollment in your institution.

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Alumni Interview Report #1

Academic (3)
Good grades and mid 600 to low 700 scores
Love of Learning—'no rating'
Intellectual Curiosity—'no rating'
Intellectual Originality—'no rating'

Extracurricular, Athletic, Community, Employment, Family Commitments (3)
Above average activity or participation

Personal Qualities (3)
Above average personal appeal and character
Openness to new ideas and new people—'no rating'
Contribution to college life—'no rating'
What kind of roommate would this student be?—'no rating'

Overall (3)
Strong candidate

This candidate is a very pleasant, open, interesting, affable individual. She expresses herself quite well. Her main activity has been making documentary films. Evidently a year or two ago she was #3 in the country and she has obtained a second place in national competition for this activity. She is very interested in people and exerting herself with history as a means to best understand and predict future events in the world. She is quite sincere in these feelings. It was enjoyable speaking with her. She appeared quite fluid in her presentation, however, discussing off the beaten track theoretical subjects she appeared to not have the depth and ability to interpolate what I have seen in other students that I have interviewed. She probably would make a good student at Harvard, however, I do feel that a more structured environment could possibly lead to less frustration for her in the future. She probably will develop more fully to her potential in such an academic environment.

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Alumni Interview Report #2

Academic (3)
Good grades and mid 600 to low 700 scores

Love of Learning—'outstanding'
Intellectual Curiosity—'outstanding'
Intellectual Originality—'outstanding'

Carrie Miller is a vivacious young woman who attends a large high school and seems to have enjoyed her experience there. She is taking a full course load of honors physics, AP Spanish, BC calculus, government and economics, and literature and composition. She also has a course in fashion marketing. She has particularly enjoyed her government and economics class which seems to be held on alternate days. Her teacher has done a wonderful job of including current events into the curriculum and Carrie feels that she has a much better understanding of the current economic situation. She never liked poetry, but is now enjoying it very much. She made me want to take the class.

She shines when she talks about film making and history. Apparently she started with a seventh and eighth grade assignment and was hooked on it. I could relate to that assignment because one of my granddaughters was involved in such a project and did research on her grandfather. I am not certain who had the most fun. Carrie just continued on her own and hopes to concentrate in film-making and history in college.

Extracurricular, Athletic, Community, Employment, Family Commitments (2)
Local or regional recognition; major accomplishment(s)

Carrie has spread her time between school and community activities. She has participated in the orchestra, wind ensemble, and marching band all four years of high school, playing the oboe in the orchestra and wind ensemble, and the cymbals in the marching band. She also spends time as the head copy writer for the school newspaper, was a columnist last year and a staff writer in the previous year. The administration must have confidence in her because she served on school-based decision making committees. We spoke a bit about her thoughts on the grade class-rank subcommittee. I also had served on such a committee in my local school district and knew how much the few student's opinions were valued.

She has spent four hours a week on ballet, but does not perform in any productions. The small class seems to be made up of members from a wide age group, but she loves to dance.

Her filmmaking seems to be more of an intense extracurricular activity that is not done in conjunction with school. She has won honors on the national and state level, finished first place in a film festival and has had her films catalogued in several museums. I am certain that you have the complete list, but her enthusiasm and interest in this area is amazing. I am certain that we will be hearing more about her in the years to come. She brought pictures of the many people who agreed to be interviewed by her. I must admit I was impressed with her ability to get these people to give her time for her short ten minute film.

She applied and was accepted to the County Campaign for Young Adult Involvement and is a member of the County Youth Council. She enjoys meeting students

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from other parts of the County and working with them to come up with ideas from the youth perspective.

During the summer she works at a local ice cream shop and enjoys meeting so many people. It seems many of them love to talk with her. She has to be a good listener and observer.

Personal Qualities (2)

Strong personal appeal and character

Openness to new ideas and new people—'outstanding'
Contribution to college life—'outstanding'
What kind of roommate would this student be?—'outstanding'

Carrie is a warm, caring individual. She has two older brothers, one lives in the city and works for an advertising agency. On the side he is also interested in theater. I teased her about following in her brother's footsteps, but she was quick to tell me that it was a recent interest of hi, but a long-time interest of hers. Her other brother lives at home and seems to be doing well. He has Asperger's, but functions quite well. Her mother is a social worker with the state Department of Mental Health and works with parents trying to find the best resources for their children with problems. Her father is a TV news editor who allows her to use his editing program on his laptop.

She seems to have a number of friends and care about them. I think that she would bring her enthusiasm and skills to the College.

Overall (2-)

Clear admit; one to recruit

Rare and rewarding exchange of ideas
Easy flow of conversation

This interview is a second one for Carrie. She was so disturbed with her first interview that her counselor called the Admissions Office and I agreed to see her. I liked Carrie and think that she would thrive at Harvard.

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Grace Blake Cheng

School: Riverside School
Description: Independent K-12 day school for girls on the West Coast; 100% of students continue onto university
Ethnicity: Chinese and Afro-Caribbean

Parents:	Never married, lives with both		
Mother:	Child care worker	**Father:**	Psychiatric aide
Education:	High school degree	**Education:**	Some college

Tentative field of study: Engineering
Commitment: 1 (1-5 scale: 1, absolutely certain; 5, undecided)
Intended occupation: Government/Politics
Commitment: 2 (1-5 scale: 1, absolutely certain; 5, undecided)
College activities: Debate; Harvard Engineers Without Borders
Commitment: 2 (1-5 scale: 1, absolutely certain; 5, undecided)

Class rank: School does not rank; 65 students in the graduating class

SAT:	720/700/690	
SAT subject tests:	690 Physics	760 Math II

Extracurricular Activities:
City Police Youth Advisory (10-12)
- Youth rep. and liaison
- Wrote and produced PSA
- 3.5 hours/week, 42 weeks/year

Public Housing Cooperative (9-12)
- Member, initiated youth group
- 2 hours/week, 52 weeks/year

Peer Mentorship Group (10-12)
- Founder, organizer
- 2 hours/week, 40 weeks/year

Student body president (12)
- 5 hours/week, 40 weeks/year

Referee (10-12)
- 3 hours/week, 24 weeks/year

Violin, tenor sax, clarinet (9-12)
- 3 hours/week, 40 weeks/year

Debate (9-12)
- 3rd place in state
- 1 hour/week, 40 weeks/year

Athletics:
Soccer (9-12)
- Goalkeeper

Capoeira
Yoga
Kayaking

Employment:
Research Intern (eng.)
40 hrs/week, summer

Academic Honors:
National Merit Scholarship Semifinalist
Secondary school scholarship (100% of fees)
Community leadership award finalist

Advanced Placement Test Results:
Computer Science 5

Short answer (most meaningful activity)

After completing the intensive Rockies Institute summer program, I was placed at Pinecrest Wireless Networking (PWN) for a summer internship. During my 5 weeks at PWN, I worked on improving the accuracy of PWN product performance test procedures. While I appreciated the technical aspect of my task, I was particularly proud of the improved customer service aspect of my proposed solution. Additionally, I redesigned an internal database for all of PWN's projects. My version of the database was published to the online server, to be used by PWN managers around the world. In my capacity as an intern, I used my logic, creativity, and problem solving skills while demonstrating my proficiency with Microsoft Access as well as my ability to communicate effectively in a team environment.

Personal Statement

As a teenager, I have a love-and-hate relationship with social networking sites. While I am passionate about using technology to advance our lives, I am concerned about the risks that youth face while on the Internet. Presenting my extensively researched speech about youth and social networking sites to adults and teenagers at state championships debate banquet, I was met with resistance from most teenagers to discuss the topic, and denial from adults who did not believe in the alarming statistics I brought up. During my speech, a young woman loudly scoffed at my statements. It was obvious that my topic was not discussed often, but never did I cease spreading my message—I knew it was too important to abandon. I knew that a third of teenagers online have been contacted by a stranger and that online words can leave deep wounds. I knew many people who had suffered, and continue to be hurt by online interactions with both friends and strangers; I have consoled many as they thanked me for being so open to discussing this highly emotional topic. The youth I talked to felt vulnerable, alone, and targeted. I was more motivated than ever before to continue promoting safer online interactions. Steadfast to my commitments of creating dialogue and promoting safe online experiences for youth, I returned home and decided to approach my school about the possibility of conducting workshops for the student body about safe online interactions. As Technology Head at my school, I was given opportunities to meet with staff to discuss my concerns, but never the student body. However, I made sure that whenever possible, I reminded my peers not to accept a friend request from a stranger, and I strongly discouraged posting inappropriate photos, videos, and derogatory comments online—once, I grabbed hold of a computer to delete a degrading picture as it was being uploaded onto Facebook.

The social risks that I take are miniscule in severity when contrasted to the risks that my friends and peers encounter while online. I truly believe my actions to stop cyberbullying and other inappropriate conduct online is the right thing to do; I know I will see the benefits of my actions in the future. I also know that I cannot stop all the online misconduct and cyberbullying. This fall, on a Friday night, a serious cyberbullying incident took place,

involving my entire school and damaging the integrity of students and staff. At that point, I took the initiative to contact the technology staff at Riverside and then proceeded to counsel those that were extremely hurt. Also, I wrote a speech, which I then presented to the entire student body on Monday morning during an impromptu assembly, without teachers present. Turning my speech into an interactive workshop, I submitted to the entire student body that instituting safe technology use was an important aspect of developing a caring school community. Afterwards, I led students to draft a declaration committing to promoting safer online presence. I am currently modifying this workshop, as I have been invited to deliver it at several elementary schools in the area. I have also had the extreme privilege to discuss and work on the declaration with a police officer who specializes in computer forensics.

It was so rewarding to be able to finally express myself; it was even more rewarding when people approached me privately to thank me for my words and what I had to say, confiding that they were too shy to speak their mind but wished for me to continue speaking mine. Later that week, a Social Studies teacher told me that for an essay assignment about leadership and leadership qualities, several eighth-grade students wrote about me. I have never been so touched. I believe such rewards and honors came my way because I was following my passion and truly believe in my message. Through my initiatives I hope to have conveyed my passion for safe online interactions and my belief that conducting oneself with integrity is at all times crucial. My experiences have already taught me that the topic I have chosen to champion is one not freely talked about, and 'taboo' to some; however the response to it must not be censorship nor denial but rather an open mind and a willingness to listen. Throughout my workshops, speeches, and discussions, I have begun a controversial but necessary conversation with my school and community at large about a pressing topic that poses many dangers. I have shared my message in a way that suits my passions and consequently, have had countless rewarding experiences.

Despite risking social isolation due to my stance against inappropriate online behavior, I remain confident that what I am doing will benefit my community. Having a safe community, especially for youth, is undoubtedly essential. These safe communities must exist both in the real world as well as in the virtual one.

Additional Essay

Living in a healthy, vibrant community in the Traditions Cooperative Housing Development, the spirit of giving is a constant source of inspiration and hope. My own experiences of community service are truly invaluable and I cherish opportunities to help others. Before we moved into subsidized housing, my family suffered financial and emotional setbacks resulting from a serious accident. Unable to continue my expensive violin lesions, a neighbor offered me free sessions. Fueled by this gesture of kindness, I am inspired to tutor younger children in my neighborhood. I hope I can share with them the passion to create beautiful music. I am proud that they come to me ready to clap rhythms and practice scales. Inside the gates at Traditions, you can hear a handful of violinists playing their own unique tunes.

There are numerous ways to help out at Traditions. From helping an ill neighbor take out their garbage, to cooking meals for a family with a newborn baby, to putting on seasonal events for the young children, I make sure that I not only contribute to the best of my ability, but also take the initiative to help my community in new ways. With respect to

my interests in youth mentorship and sustainability, I have introduced several projects at Traditions.

The rising cost of fresh produce and the economic downturn affects everyone, particularly families with lower incomes. With an interest in sustainability, I researched and implemented deck-top gardening and transformed our common areas of green space into pots of tomatoes, herbs, lettuce, blueberries, squash, corn, peas, beans, and carrots, and pumpkins. This summer, cultivating the interests of youth and seniors alike, Traditions members turned "green thumbs" and discovered that I make a delicious tomato/basil orzo salad! Recognizing that we were using more water, I encouraged establishing a grey-water system. In a meeting, I explained why collecting grey-water to water our gardens and pots would benefit Traditions as well as the environment. I organized and collected grey-water from each housing unit and soon other youth (including four and five year olds) started doing the same. It because one of the most fun activities at Traditions. After that, I realized that the youth at Traditions had so much energy to give that I designed more initiatives for us to undertake.

At Traditions, the adults participated through committees and the young children got involved through various co-op celebrations. Traditions didn't have a committee for pre-teens and teenagers to fully engage in our community. With weekly homework-help sessions, offering free music lessons, and general membership opportunities, I formed the Traditions Youth Committee. Recently, my state's department of housing and community services recognized that one of the mandates for the co-op housing movement is a focus on the next generation. I have been invited to attend the next national co-op housing meeting where I will be discussing youth engagement.

Truthfully, one cannot measure the value of cooking and freezing a week's worth of soup for a neighbor who has had a family member pass away, or the value of younger children coming up to my door knowing that they can get homework help. Living in my co-op is not just about helping others in times of need—it's also about celebrations and thriving in a supportive community. Co-op living is amazing to be a part of: everyone knows their neighbors, we work together for good causes, and depend on each other—all for the benefit of our healthy community. Each member can, and does, offer something unique to the co-op. With my participation at Traditions Housing, I believe that I have made a valuable contribution to my community. The true beauty and importance of living and contributing to such a community as my housing development is that every action that benefits your community benefits you as well. Traditions is a wonderful community that I am so honored to live in.

Secondary School Report

Grace Blake Cheng received the Gold Scholarship as an entering student at Riverside. This is a full-tuition scholarship presented to a new eighth grade student. The criteria for this need-based scholarship are demonstrated excellence in academics, citizenship and extracurricular activities. I have known Grace for the past five years in my role as her academic advisor.

As demonstrated by her outstanding academic achievement, Grace is a highly capable student. With her postsecondary goal being engineering, Grace has focused on the sciences in her high school program. She has taken the highest level of courses offered by our school in the physical sciences and mathematics. Grace is equally talented in the

humanities and languages. This year Grace is taking AP Microeconomics and AP English Literature, in addition to AP Chemistry and AP Calculus. She is expected to obtain a score of "5" in all her AP exams. Grace was unable to fit in French in her junior year so she took the course through Distance Education. Throughout Grace's high school years, her teachers have commented on her ability to grasp concepts with ease, on her sharp analytical and critical thinking skills as well as on her ability to problem solve. Whether it is in a Law class or a Physics class, Grace's contributions are thoughtful, meaningful, intelligent and insightful. Grace is extremely creative. She is able to express profound thought with facility; and can do so in diverse and creative ways. When Grace appears before an audience; be it to address an assembly, deliver a recitation or a speech at a public speaking contest; there is a hushed anticipation among the audience knowing that it will be a moving, powerful or entertaining speech, poem or reading as suited to the occasion.

Grace is truly an exemplary leader, a voice in the community and an advocate for numerous causes. She has been a member of her local subsidized housing board, an HIV/AIDS action committee, a youth representative on the local police chief's youth advisory committee and a representative to the state attorney general's youth crime advisory committee. At school, she has been debate president—her skill and talent leading her to represent the school at events such as the state debate championships (earning 3rd place overall) and the International Public Speaking Tournament in 2010. In the spring this year, Grace was elected by the student body to be the student body president her senior year. Grace has already demonstrated her initiative and tremendous leadership in this role. One aspect of her role has been her involvement in the new student orientation. Riverside had a record number of students this year. Grace has been most involved in helping new students, who have come from a variety of different schools and countries, adjust to their new life at Riverside. I have heard from parents of new students about how Grace has reached out to students even outside of school, involving them in social activities; thus making sure they feel welcome at the school. One of Grace's tremendous leadership qualities is that no task is too big or small for her—she will take on a major challenge, yet pay attention to the smaller details.

There isn't enough room to talk about this very special young woman. She is one of the most exceptional students that I have met in my career. Grace's incredible academic talents, her creativity, her ability to express herself most succinctly are qualities that are complemented and enhanced by her extremely compassionate, gentle and warm nature. Grace is a person of the highest integrity; who is not afraid to defend her values and to speak out against injustice and wrongdoing at any forum whether it is an assembly or a public meeting—her delivery is always gracious, forthright and sincere. I feel honored to recommend Grace to your institution; she has my highest recommendation.

Transcript

Grade 9		**Grade 10**	
Personal Health 9	91	English 10	95
English 9	97	Social Studies 10	95
Social Studies 9	96	Math 10	94
Mathematics 9	95	Math Enriched 10	89
Math Enriched 9	89	Science 10	91
Science 9	92	Spanish 10	93
Programming 9	100	Physical Edu 10	91

Ethics 9	97	Band 10	93
French 9 Hon	93	Programming 11	96
Spanish 9	96	French 11 Pre AP	87
Physical Edu 9	91		
Art 9 New Media	99		
Band 9	96		

Grade 11		**Grade 12 (Term 1)**	
Social Studies 11	96	AP Eng Lit & Comp	89
Math 11	97	AP Macroeconomics	96
Math Hon 11	89	Math Accelerated 12	89
Chemistry 11	97	AP Calculus 12	95
Physics 11	98	Chemistry 12	95
English 12	96	Physics 12	97
Law 12	96	AP Chemistry 12	95
French 12	99		
Film 11/12	97		
International Studies 11	98		
English 11	96		
AP Programming 12	96		
Planning 10	100		

Teacher Recommendation 1

I have learned many lessons from the students I teach and those that I coach in our school debate club. To write this letter I made a list of the lessons that I have learned from Grace Blake Cheng, and I find within it a long list of examples of instances when her intelligence has moved me to examine things more deeply. Her strength of character has inspired me to more frequently take a stand, or to see that a stand could and should be taken. Her consistency of action for those who have a quieter voice to find a way to amplify their own voice, has been unwavering. Grace challenges me to be the best person I can be.

Grace has been a student in my classroom for three years of the last five years. In her first year of transition from a multi-age cluster class in the public school system to eighth grade in an independent school for girls, she spoke with maturity and wit about the social dynamics of this new environment, and of learning within such different paradigms. She came to this school with an established interest in others' safety, security, and development. She has witnessed and thought about social and economic injustice for a long time, and she responds to this world with realism that is tempered with a healthy optimism. In my Ethics 9 class and Social Studies 8 and 10 classes, this theme of seeking social justice, through actions and words, has remained constant for Grace. She is an unyielding advocate for fairness, regardless of the personal sacrifice she might need to make to do what is right.

I have continued to know Grace in her junior and senior years outside of the classroom, and in a manner that is perhaps more attached to the real world. Grace is a tremendously strong public speaker and debater, as her resume attests. Her competitive pursuits in this area have not only given her a literal stage on which to perform formidably, but they have also given her a tremendous number of circumstances within which she was forced to personally grow, and to embody and advocate for the morals that she spoke of in

her speeches. Traveling both nationally and internationally for public speaking and debate competitions has presented Grace with experiences from which other students might have shrunk.

While Grace's in-class strengths as an academic are most notable, her out of school pursuits in debate and service to others, have spoken loudly and positively to her intellectual and personal strengths as a responsible member of a community. Involvement in debate has provided Grace with the opportunity to think and query the best possible of application of policies for which she had already been advocating in the real world. Through her service on the police advisory committee, as a mentor and tutor within her housing co-operative, and on committees across the city that celebrate and support those in our community who need health supports (HIV/AIDS Action and the American Cancer Society), pursue green initiatives, and coordinate the annual celebration of Black History Month, Grace has put her abilities to the test.

It is very easy to recall, celebrate, and describe those in history who have chosen the right path, not the easy one. But to be held accountable by a student whose actions mirror that concept as a rule, is most notable in this era. Please let me recommend to you this most exceptional young woman.

No basis		Below average	Average	Good (above average)	Very Good (well above average)	Excellent (top 10%)	Outstanding (top 5%)	One of the top few I've encountered in my career. (top 1%)
	Academic achievement						X	
	Intellectual promise						X	
	Quality of writing						X	
	Creative, original thought						X	
	Productive class discussion							X
	Respect accorded by faculty							X
	Disciplined work habits						X	
	Maturity							X
	Motivation							X
	Leadership							X
	Integrity							X
	Reaction to setbacks						X	
	Concern for others							X
	Self-confidence						X	
	Initiative, independence							X
	OVERALL							X

Teacher Recommendation 2

I agreed to write this reference letter because I hold Grace in the highest regard possible. Her character is exemplary; I trust her implicitly.

I have had the pleasure of teaching Grace for the past 4 years. Last year I taught her AP Computer Science and prior to that I taught her Programming 11 and Programming 9. The first year I taught Grace, she stood out from her peers; her desire for knowledge is vast and her ability to grasp difficult concepts is impressive. She continued to develop her analytical skills in subsequent courses. Grace is a creative thinker, frequently coming up with a solution that others wouldn't think of, or approaching a problem in a way that facilitated understanding by the entire class. Often Grace would enhance programs beyond the assignment's requirements because she was passionate about her creations. She was always at the top of the class. In AP Computer Science she continued to excel, helping others and filling the class with pertinent, probing questions. She scored a 5 (full credit) for the college level course while still in her junior year, and received the Computer Science Award for top academics in the subject. Grace is a bright individual with a great work ethic; she is extremely reliable and meticulous in everything she pursues.

Grace's academic excellence is unquestionable, but it is only one facet of the impressive individual she is. She has a larger than life personality, strong moral character, and a natural charisma that have made her an exemplary leader. She is the school's student body president. Her problem-solving expertise is not limited to programming genius. I witnessed her leadership last weekend when a cyber-bullying event had a dramatic effect on a number of our students. In the midst of the chaos that had some students in tears and others out for revenge, Grace sent out a message to calm her peers and bring them together as a community. She then asked the schools administration for a special assembly with her peers to discuss the issues that were brought up in the messages: racism, classism, and libel. She, alone, led a discussion with 300 students and allowed them to vent their frustrations and work towards resolving the conflict. It was amazing. An event that could have had the school in turmoil was quelled with a calm voice and a message of building community.

Grace came to this school as a scholarship student and she exemplifies all of the aspects of a true scholar. Sometimes the stigma of being a scholarship student at a school of privilege is daunting. I have known a number of students who really struggled to fit into the culture of the school. Grace was not one of them. She has never let anything stand in the way of her excellence and her peers have embraced her as a leader and friend.

In short, I have been teaching for 9 years and have taught Presidential Scholars and students who have gone on to Ph.D.s and M.D.s—elite students. I can say, definitively, that Grace has the most potential of any student I have ever taught. She is a highly capable individual and will be an invaluable asset to your school. She will take whatever opportunity you give her and parlay it into greatness.

No basis		Below average	Average	Good (above average)	Very Good (well above average)	Excellent (top 10%)	Outstanding (top 5%)	One of the top few I've encountered in my career. (top 1%)
	Academic achievement							X
	Intellectual							X

	promise							
	Quality of writing							X
	Creative, original thought							X
	Productive class discussion							X
	Respect accorded by faculty							X
	Disciplined work habits							X
	Maturity							X
	Motivation							X
	Leadership							X
	Integrity							X
	Reaction to setbacks						X	
	Concern for others						X	
	Self-confidence							X
	Initiative, independence							X
	OVERALL							X

Alumni Interview Report

Academic (2)
Magna potential. Excellent grades and mid- to high-700 scores (33+ ACT)
Love of Learning—'truly unusual'
Intellectual Curiosity—'truly unusual'
Intellectual Originality—'outstanding'

Grace appears to be a motivated intellectual. Though I didn't ask her for test scores or grades, so I am unable to report on her academic success in those terms, we did discuss her approach to academics, which she has clearly taken control of over the course of her high school years. Upon entering Riverside School in eighth grade, Grace researched and planned the academic path she would follow to ensure she could maximize her classroom opportunities. She accelerated her learning such that she was able to finish the standard senior year requirements either in her junior, or as early as possible in her senior year. For instance, she churned through all Riverside had to offer in one major area of interest, Computer Science, by her junior year. This left her the opportunity to enroll in as many extra classes as she could handle with her busy sporting and extracurricular life (see below). Understanding how busy she is in day-to-day life, taking a large class load as she has and performing well in those classes demonstrates a natural intellectual ability. On this note, I would have marked her academic numerical rating higher if I had the numbers to support it.

To further expand her academic pursuits above and beyond what Riverside had to offer she also took the initiative to join the Rockies Institute program (a four-week summer enrichment program where high school students live on a college campus with various areas of focus, Grace's being "entrepreneurship"). She was especially excited about her opportunity to work on/learn about a water purification project for remote villages in Ghana through "Engineers Without Borders". What struck me as progressive for a high school student was her interest and understanding of how the most difficult hurdle to overcome for this project was overcoming cultural and ethnic differences to achieve local buy-in for the system. The biggest obstacles weren't technical, they were cultural. She expressed a significant interest to continue her work with Engineers Without Borders at Harvard.

Extracurricular, Athletic, Community, Employment, Family Commitments (2+)
Substantial school-wide, regional or state recognition; major contribution/ leadership

This is where Grace really shines. While we only had an hour to talk, Grace could write a book on her extracurricular activities which include soccer, debate, public speaking, involvement with school projects and plays (with a recent production with funds raised donated to Haiti), the violin, and much more. When she first arrived at Riverside School she joined ten extracurricular clubs her first semester before scaling back to a more manageable number! Though I heard success stories in many of these areas I would rather focus on her community involvement and interest in public policy driven through her desire to better the world she lives in.

When she was very young, her early love of dogs and police officers led her to get involved in organizing a "police dog demo day" for local kids' sports teams. This grew to include other police-community related events such as police motorcycle demos, etc. Over time her involvement in Police-Community related projects only grew stronger. Today she

sits on two wide-ranging advisory councils – she is on the local police chief's youth advisory committee and a representative to the state attorney general's youth crime advisory committee.

We discussed the local committee in more depth. Her role, in her words, is to expand both the police department's and the community's sense of "cultural competency." (*Here is some background from my own experience, not from Grace. Our local police departments are going through some of their worst public opinion polls after repeated scandals, abuses, etc. over the last few years. The distrust from the public combined with a scattered mix of various ethnic communities in the city, many of whom don't speak English, leads to an often tense, untrustworthy relationship.*). Grace acts as an intermediary between the community and the police departments, as well as between the various ethnic communities themselves. Her role is to build trust and communication between the two groups through education and awareness initiatives as well as act as a resource for community youth to talk to. As she put it, she "mends broken cultural bridges." She has been able to combine her love of computer science to use social media and written/video communication devices to aid in this role.

Further demonstrating her devotion to the community are two more examples:

1) Five years ago she spearheaded a group of residents in her cooperative housing unit to plant a community garden (a garden that is open to either all the residents within a building complex, neighbourhood, or even the public at large). Her goal was to decrease her neighbourhood's carbon footprint by living within the "100 mile diet" with the help of a local vegetable garden. She was successful at navigating both the political and technical difficulties and built the garden, which is still growing strong today. Along the way she realized she could do even better "environmentally" by building a rainwater collection system to water the garden, reducing the dependence on and use of city water.
2) At the age of eight, Grace started playing the violin (after begging her parents to start when she was five). Soon after her mother had a serious injury which prevented Grace's family from being able to afford her music lessons. The community supported her family to the extent that they banded together to ensure Grace could continue her lessons. She explained that she learned two valuable lessons through that experience – the power and strength of both music and community, and that music should be accessible to all. She lives both these lessons by offering free violin lessons to others in the community.

Personal Qualities (1)

Rare personal appeal and character

Openness to new ideas and new people—'truly unusual'
Contribution to college life—'outstanding'
What kind of roommate would this student be?—'truly unusual'

Grace is a confident, engaged, community-minded individual. Her experience in public speaking/debating combined with her vast volunteer experience in the community around her finds her comfortable in, I imagine, just about any situation. I couldn't see any indication she was nervous entering the interview and I certainly see her as the type of person who would tackle a freshman year at Harvard head-on. She lives life as a participant and leader, not as an observer. With her specific volunteer experience in areas such as communication and conflict resolution, I imagine she would make for a fantastic roommate.

Though I have a bias to this particular subject, I was especially impressed with her community and environmental focus. From an early age she has delved into the community in every possible way to unite those around her in a positive, peaceful way. Admirably, she is concerned with far more than just her own personal success.

Overall (2)
Clear admit; one to recruit

Rare and rewarding exchange of ideas
Easy flow of conversation
Diamond in the rough

By this point you will not be surprised to read that I fully endorse Grace for acceptance to Harvard. If I were sitting on the admissions committee and deciding between herself and myself when I applied to Harvard, I would have hands-down picked Grace. The class will be better off for it. I left the interview with the feeling I had been talking more to a Harvard classmate than a high school student.

Additional Comments

Grace has experience with four languages:

English (Primary) – Fluent
French – Fluent
Spanish – Conversational
Cantonese – Introductory

A note on my numerical ratings: As this is the beginning of my involvement with the interviewing process for Harvard, I can't say I have a strong sense of where my ratings should sit. While I understand that Grace is clearly an exceptional applicant, I also understand that Harvard sees 30,000+ exceptional applications a year. I am inclined to list her as all "1s" – but have tried to show where I think her strengths especially lie (also considering I do not know her grades or test scores).

Peter Duran

School: Island High School
Description: Highly ranked public school on the West Coast; 75% of graduates attend four-year colleges; many AP courses offered
Ethnicity: Hispanic (Guatemala) and Caucasian

Mother: Speech language pathologist
College: State university (BA, MA)

Father: Physician
College: State university (BA, MD)

Siblings: Robert (15)

Tentative field of study: Engineering
Commitment: 2 (1-5 scale: 1, absolutely certain; 5, undecided)
Intended occupation: Academic (Teaching, Research, Administration)
Commitment: 2 (1-5 scale: 1, absolutely certain; 5, undecided)
College activities: Debate, Social Service
Commitment: 5 (1-5 scale: 1, absolutely certain; 5, undecided)

Class rank: 95%/700 (4.9 wtd GPA)
SAT I: 800/760/800
SAT II: 800 U.S. History, 800 Chemistry, 780 Physics, 800 Math II

Extracurricular Activities:
University IWST (12)
5 hrs/wk, 40 wks/yr
FIRST Robotics (11)
Team captain
15 hrs/wk, 6 wks/yr
Robotics courses (9, 11)
3 courses at community college
7 hrs/wk, 20 wks/yr
Volunteer computer technician (9-12)
2 hrs/wk, 40 wks/yr
V.A. Hospital Volunteer (11)
20 hrs/wk, 4 wks/yr
Regional Science & Engineering Fairs (9)
6 hrs/wk, 4 wks/yr
Special Education Teaching Asst.
20 hrs/wk, 4 wks/yr

Athletics:
None

Employment:
None

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Academic Honors:
Principal's High Honor Roll
National Merit Scholarship Semifinalist
Science & Engineering Fair Awards
National Honor Society

Advanced Placement Test Results:

US History	5
European History	5
Chemistry	5
Physics B	5
History of Art	4

Summer Activities
Biology 1H & Science Research
Community Service
University Computer Science IWST Scholar (1/15 chosen from metro area)

Activities (most meaningful)

I led our FIRST Robotics team to the semi-finals, winning 6th place among 57 teams in the city regional competition. It was the first time that our school had entered, and we lacked any experience. As captain, I was charged with forging a team from a group of bright but independent volunteers. I began by proposing a simple design which we could perfect, while others wanted sophistication. It took lengthy discussions, listening, compromise, and a few firm edicts to get things going. We were way off schedule, but we persevered, working feverishly many nights and week-ends. By the time we placed our robot in its shipping crate, we had become a truly cohesive team. As the ten of us ran onto the stage to receive the "Best Newcomers Award" my excitement was surpassed by the pride of having led and inspired my team towards our common goal.

Personal Statement

For eight weeks this summer, I participated in a program that changed me in unanticipated ways. When I first entered the University Institute for Wireless Sensor Technology (IWST) I did not know what to expect. I was one of fifteen High School Scholars who, according to the website, would have, "a chance to gain first-hand knowledge in a university setting, conducting revolutionary research on wireless sensor technology." I knew that the program was highly competitive and that I would receive a stipend, but I was unclear of what wireless sensor technology entailed.

Under the supervision of a staff researcher and a graduate student, we were charged with tailoring the university-designed EnvoPDA software to support the coastal monitoring project. I became apprehensive when I realized how much computer programming was involved; my knowledge was self taught and limited. My concern grew when I heard some of the other students describe their extensive coding experience. How much programming do they think I know? What have I gotten myself into? Just then the Nike slogan, "just do it" came to mind and I resolved to plunge in.

I arrived every morning at 6:30 to beat the traffic and to enjoy some time to gather my thoughts and experiment with the code. By 7:30 the others started trickling in, filling the room with greetings, animated conversations, exclamations of frustration, and bursts of laughter. We were a diverse group, more guys than girls, some more knowledgeable than others, but all enthusiastic and willing to help one another. With their assistance, I learned quickly and discovered that I had an aptitude for programming. I valued the camaraderie, the sense of teamwork and the feeling of accomplishment.

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To my surprise, the focus on teamwork and the resolution to "just do it" also helped me to overcome a personal barrier. When I discovered that one of our first icebreakers was a physical challenge course, I immediately started planning my escape. I have never been good at sports and I certainly did not want to make a fool of myself! However, when the time came, I again decided to "just do it." Predictably, I was a liability to the group. Not only did I come crashing down repeatedly when trying to maneuver on a log, but I also brought two or three others with me. Everyone laughed, but this time, I laughed too. Having exposed my sport inadequacies up front, I later felt free to enter in the weekly games of Ultimate Frisbee and soccer. I came to appreciate that casual sports are about attitude rather than aptitude.

On August 17th, I was proud to present our final results to the IWST faculty and guests. I was struck by how much I had learned, not just about programming, but about myself. I had discovered a whole new passion in the field of computer science, and had conquered my fear of being ridiculed at sports. Most importantly, I learned that it pays off to put misgivings aside and "just do it."

Additional Essay

There are three themes that run through my family, influence my college goals, and lead me to seek the best possible college education. The first is that education is a way to get ahead in life. The second is learning adds enjoyment to your life. The third is a commitment to people and relationships. A Harvard education is the best at providing all three. There is no questioning the real-world value of a Harvard degree, the opportunity to experience the breadth of fields way beyond my interests in computers and engineering, and Harvard's tradition of infusing students with a commitment to service.

Higher education has had a major impact on my family. My father, the son of uneducated Guatemalan immigrants, is a prime example. His parents came to this country without high school degrees yet they infused their children with the value of education as the key to success. My grandparents saw their dream realized when three of their four children obtained doctorate degrees. Early on, I became committed to carry on the dream.

My home also taught me that education and learning is pursued not only for success, but for pure enjoyment. For instance, on our vacations, we often visit famous, and sometimes, quite unique museums. I will never forget my father's frenzied pursuit around Boston in search of a skull of a man, who, 160 years ago, survived a one inch diameter steel rod piercing his head. In spite of our protests, my father would not give up until we found the skull in the Warren Anatomical Museum on the fifth floor of Harvard's Countway Library of Medicine. Experiencing my generally reserved father, gush with excitement as he told the unabridged story of Phineas Gage, made me realize how a passion for learning can keep a person young. I hope to emulate this passion in my own life.

My mother and her family bring another set of qualities. She is a speech language pathologist who works with severely impaired children. Two summers ago I volunteered at her school, mostly to fulfill community service hours, and not expecting the personal satisfaction I gained from the experience. When one of the boys started to greet me each day by shouting, "Mr. Peter is here, Mr. Peter is here!", I understood why my mother loves her job and why my hours spent in the classroom had become so gratifying. The sense of commitment to others also reaches into my immediate family. When my maternal grandfather was diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease we all needed to adjust. Nowadays we all contribute; I visit often, listen to him when he repeats himself, and gladly spend time with

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him on his terms. Instead of causing alienation, his illness brought our family closer together.

Thus, my background has not only shaped my aspirations, but has given me a solid foundation for college and beyond. Like my parents, I plan to pursue a graduate degree and to make learning an integral part of my life. As someone oriented to science and engineering, I see a Harvard education as not only a vehicle to a good job or career, but the best way to develop a lifelong appreciation of history, literature, art, and so many other areas. It is a challenge to find a better university where I can combine engineering with the humanities and nurture my commitment to community and others. This is my family tradition, and I hope to transmit these set of values to my own family some day.

Secondary School Report

Peter is an impressive young man, deserving of great respect for both his high academic accomplishments and his success outside of the classroom. I give Peter my highest recommendation for many reasons; he shows enormous potential as a college student, scientist, computer programmer and as a contributor to society. Peter represents the very best that Island has to offer and has proven successful in all of his endeavors. Part of what makes him so successful is that he is not afraid of a challenge, and more importantly, he is not afraid of failure. He is always seeking opportunities to challenge himself and takes advantage of all the resources available to him. At a young age he has already proven that he thrives in a challenging environment by taking so many honors and AP courses at one of the most competitive high schools in the country.

Island High School is a very competitive, high achieving school academically and was recently ranked among the top 200 high schools in the *Newsweek* national rankings. Although the majority of our students are high-achieving and dedicated to excel, Peter has performed above and beyond his peers in everything he has pursued. He has maintained an exceptional weighted GPA of 4.9 while taking eleven AP classes and nine Honors classes. Peter has exhausted all that we have to offer him at IHS and the maturity that he has demonstrated leads me to believe he is capable of tremendous success in college and beyond.

While succeeding in all his courses, he finds time to participate on the two different Robotics teams, is actively involved in Science Research Program, and Science Olympiad. Moreover, despite his busy schedule, he finds time to volunteer as an aide during the summer in a basic skills class and volunteers his computer programming skills to the American Institute of Women in Higher Education organization. He has also used his summers to further explore his options for college and define his major through programs like Carnegie Mellon's "Expanding Opportunities in Math, Science and Technology" program.

Most importantly, I believe Peter will be an invaluable addition to your university. He is definitely ready or should I say has been ready for some time now to take on the academic demands at the college level. I envision him accomplishing his many dreams and goals and having an extremely successful future. It is with great pleasure that I give my full support and highest recommendation to Peter Duran's application for admission to your university.

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Island High School Transcript

Grade 9		**Grade 10**	
English 1H	A	English 2H	A
Geometry H	A	Algebra 2H	A
Sci Research	A	Sci Research	A
World Hist H	A	Chemistry 1H	A
Spanish 2	A	AP English	A
PE	A	PE	A

Grade 9 (Summer School)	
Sci Research	A
Biology 1H	A

Grade 11		**Grade 12**
English 3H	A	Internship
PreCalculus H	A	English 4AP Lit
Sci Research	A	Calculus BC AP
Chemistry 2 AP	A	Envir Sci AP
Physics B AP	A	Physics C AP
US History AP	A	Economics AP
Art History AP	A	Am Govern AP

Teacher Recommendation 1

I have had the pleasure of having Peter Duran as a student in my AP Chemistry class and in my science research program at Island High School. My experience with Peter, and my appreciation for his qualities and promise, leads me to write you this letter of recommendation for admission to your university/college.

My classes are known for their rigor and only high achieving students enroll in them. Peter certainly qualified for this self-selected group. He is intellectually curious, quick to grasp concepts and eager to challenge himself. His grades reflect his abilities; he is a National Merit Scholarship Semi-finalist, and through his high school career he has remained on the Principal's High Honor roll and National Honor Society. He certainly has the ability to succeed as an undergraduate student and in graduate school. I have no doubt that Peter will pursue education beyond the undergraduate level.

While interested in history and literature, he is particularly passionate about science, computers, and technology where he has shown exceptional talent and aptitude. Under my supervision, he worked on science projects submitted for local competition. The first experiment involved the improvement of robotic vision through the optimization of contrast spatial sensitivity. This freshman project received the Certificate of Achievement for Outstanding Science or Engineering Fair Project from the United States Military. The project had a different focus and studied post-traumatic amnesia in head injury. It also received Honorable Mention. Prior to high school, Peter participated in the Metro-Area County Fair with an entry that involved the analysis of the amount of lift in the hovercraft as a function of the number of air outlets. His solutions to these experimental problems were both original and creative.

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During his junior year Peter was selected as team captain of the school's entry into the FIRST Robotics competition. Peter led his team to win the Best Newcomers Award at state competition. This was an incredible achievement since it was the school's first entry and yet the team placed sixth in a field of 57. Peter not only designed the robot but also demonstrated outstanding leadership and a clear sense of purpose in leading the team.

Most recently, Peter was selected as a High School Scholar for a paid summer internship at the University Institute for Wireless Sensor Technology (IWST), a program sponsored by the National Science Foundation. For eight weeks he gained first-hand experience in a university setting, conducting cutting-edge research on wireless sensor technology. He speaks enthusiastically about this extraordinary experience and the skills he acquired. "More than ever, I am convinced that I want to work in a research lab" he states. His experience was so successful that Peter has been asked by his IWST mentor to continue his internship throughout this school year. Peter has arranged to do this through a Work Experience Education Internship through our school. I have no doubt that he will do an excellent job and that he will continue learning about programming and conducting research.

In addition to his academic achievements Peter has excellent personal qualities. He is respectful, conscientious and mature. He is well liked by his peers, works well in groups and in spite of his academic standing does not show any sign of arrogance. I understand he has worked with impaired children, volunteered in a brain-injured program, and tutored friends with academic problems. All of these characteristics add to his value as a potential contributor to a university setting.

In sum, I would like to enthusiastically support Peter Duran's application.

No basis		Below average	Average	Good (above average)	Very Good (well above average)	Excellent (top 10%)	Outstanding (top 5%)	One of the top few I've encountered in my career. (top 1%)
	Academic achievement						X	
	Creative/original thought						X	
	Intellectual curiosity						X	
	Intellectual ability						X	
	Self-confidence						X	
	Independence/ initiative						X	
	Concern for others						X	
	Leadership/ influence						X	
	Work ethic						X	
	Emotional maturity						X	
	Motivation						X	
	Reaction to setbacks						X	
	Written						X	

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	expression of ideas							
	Warmth of personality						X	
	Disciplined work habits						X	
	Sense of humor						X	
	Effective class discussion						X	
	Respect accorded by peers						X	
	Respect accorded by faculty						X	
	Potential for growth						X	
	OVERALL						X	

Teacher Recommendation 2

I have the great honor of writing this letter on behalf of Peter Duran. I was his Advanced Placement United States History teacher during his junior year. He received A's both semesters and achieved a score of 5 on the AP Exam in U.S. History. I am also currently his AP Government teacher. He is doing exceptionally well at this time (my top student)!

I have just started this year's round of letters recommending my best and brightest to you, and the first on my list is Peter Duran. Peter made an impression on me within the first few days of the semester last year. His attentiveness, inquisitiveness, and outstanding class preparation made him stand out immediately. AP U.S. History (APUSH) is easily one of the most demanding courses that Island High School offers, yet even with the large work load, Peter never fell behind. He always had his key identifiers done and verbally demonstrated that he had read the chapters before the lecture. Peter is one of those more reserved students that took me by surprise during our first classroom debate (Patriots v. Loyalists). He jumped right in there and offered up well-reasoned arguments that got right to the point and easily won over his peers. He admitted later to feeling a little nervous, but during the debate no one could tell. As the year progressed, Peter grew enormously, both as a writer and in enthusiasm for the subject matter. His essays went from 5s at the beginning of the year to 8s-9s by the end. I am an AP Reader and believe me, getting an 8 or a 9 is a *very* rare academic accomplishment! He was particularly drawn to learning about the twentieth century since it tied in so well with his own family's personal narrative. He extended his discussions with me regarding the classroom topics (war, gender and other social issues, economic development) with his family members. There were many occasions when Peter would go home and share what we had just covered in class and bring back a family story the next day that pulled me into *his* world of history. I remember Peter sharing his story about how he had relatives that fought on both sides of World War I and how he grew so much closer to his grandfather when his grandfather shared his personal recollections of World War II. While Peter is extraordinarily gifted in the math and science curricula, I wanted you to know that he is passionate about everything he learns in school. He looks

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beyond what is taught in the classroom and ties it in to life. He will be a life long learner I am sure. He even listens to the history *Great Courses* tapes just for fun!

This year, Peter is in my block AP Government and AP Economics class (I teach the government part). Peter has brought with him the same level of zeal for learning that I saw last year. Over the summer, Peter and his mother tracked the election very carefully and listened to both conservative and liberal radio commentators. As a consequence, he came in to the class in September so much better prepared than some of his peers. There are 18 National Merit Semifinalist Scholars in my block class, yet even with this kind of competition, Peter is the only one with a nearly 100% (99.68) average in the course. This is unheard of! I have been teaching for 18 years and have never had a student with this high of a percentage in AP Government (and neither has the other AP Government teacher). Should you choose to accept Peter for admittance to Harvard, rest assured that you will truly be getting one of the best students I have ever had. He is brilliant, articulate, passionate, extremely curious, and thoroughly a joy to teach. I believe he would fit right in.

For all of the reasons I have given above, it is with great confidence and enthusiasm that I recommend Peter Duran for admittance to Harvard University.

No basis		Below average	Average	Good (above average)	Very Good (well above average)	Excellent (top 10%)	Outstanding (top 5%)	One of the top few I've encountered in my career. (top 1%)
	Academic achievement							X
	Intellectual promise							X
	Quality of writing						X	
	Creative, original thought							X
	Productive class discussion						X	
	Respect accorded by faculty						X	
	Disciplined work habits							X
	Maturity						X	
	Motivation							X
	Leadership						X	
	Integrity							X
	Reaction to setbacks							X
	Concern for others						X	
	Self-confidence							X
	Initiative, independence							X
	OVERALL						X	

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Peter Duran—Alumni Interview Report

Academic (1+)
Genuine scholar, Summa potential, top grades, high 700 and 800 scores combined with evidence of original scholarship

Intellectual curiosity – 2-
Love of learning – 1
Intellectual originality – 3

Has an obvious passion for engineering but is also fascinated by history and global politics.

"A modern engineer needs to have a broader understanding of social issues in order to make a difference in the world. Otherwise you end up in a cubicle, working for people who have their own views, and that's not what I want.

You could come out of MIT or Cal Tech with technical skills but I don't think you come out with knowledge. I don't think you've been enriched by the experience, you've been trained."

He has some dyslexia which makes him read a bit slower than others but he claims that this actually helps him by giving him more time to think about the text.

His parents are both from Latin America and he understands Spanish but cannot speak it. I found this surprising, especially considering his SAT verbal results.

Extracurricular, Athletic, Community, Employment, Family Commitments (3+)
Above average activity or participation

No sports except fishing and hiking on family vacations.

"I'm at peace in nature or out on the lake. I was also happiest when I was with my peers doing an internship at an engineering school. I learned a lot from working with intelligent people, peers and mentors. It wasn't the kind of education you get in high school."

Is passionate about robotics and has been robotics team leader for the past two years.

"What really excites me is building things, solving problems, I like using and applying knowledge."

Personal Qualities (3+)
Above average appeal and character

Openness to new ideas and new people – 2
Contribution to college life – 3
What kind of roommate would this student be? – 3

I liked him and found him to be friendly, cheerful, confident and sincere. Seems like he would be a positive influence on others and I think he would do well at Harvard. His parents both work to help people with mental problems and he also seems like a compassionate and thoughtful person.

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"I tend to be low-key and mellow. I'm very liberal but I live like a social conservative. I like to keep things neat and organized. I would be an easy roommate to deal with unless you are extremely messy.

I was raised Catholic but fell away and could describe myself as an agnostic. It's important to be open to all sides and then come up with solutions. If you are knowledgeable then you can find common ground."

Overall (1-)

Absolutely superior for admissions; truly unusual in the entire applicant pool

Good exchange of ideas and easy flow of conversation.

He seems intelligent, well informed and motivated to achieve.

If you could travel anywhere where would you go?

"I would go to Italy and see the Florence cathedral, or to Rome, or anywhere in Italy. I did an art history class and really enjoyed it. Most of my favorite art is in Italy."

Who is your favorite artist?

"Gauguin."

Have you been looking at my paintings?

"Yes. We did look at your website."

Gauguin hoped to find a sort of Garden of Eden still existing somewhere in this world. There are perhaps a few tribes in the Amazon or New Guinea that are still unaware of the outside world. What do you think of missionaries going in and changing things?

"That's a very hard question. I can see the arguments on both sides. We cannot go into primitive cultures like an imperialist. On the one hand we want them to have a better quality of life. On the other hand we need to preserve their languages and record as much as possible about their customs and knowledge. What I mean is that we can't be aware of things like female circumcision and allow people to suffer."

"You could be a renaissance man but I want to be a renaissance engineer."

He was knowledgeable about current events and we were able to talk in some detail about the Arab/Israeli conflict. I asked him why this conflict is important to the United States and the world and he determined that it was our dependence on oil.

We then talked about global warming.

"Life will go on, humanity will find a way to survive but it is so easy to prevent this disaster."

I asked him what he could do as an engineer that might help to solve these political and ecological problems. Gradually he came to the conclusion that we needed "infinitely renewable sources of energy." We talked about the pros and cons of all energy sources and the challenges of making engines that run on hydrogen.

I think he would do well at Harvard and has the potential to make positive contribution to the world.

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