March 23, 2023

To whom it may concern,

William Mitchell is a fourth-year student in the Psychology Ph.D. program at Temple University. He is a United States Citizen who meets the diversity requirements for the D-SPAN grant as someone from a disadvantaged background. He meets four NIH criteria under this category:

1. He was eligible for the Federal Free and Reduced Lunch Program for two or more years.
2. He previously received a Federal Pell grant.
3. He has no parents or legal guardians who completed a bachelor’s degree.
4. He grew up in a Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services-designated Low-Income and Health Professional Shortage Area.

As a first-generation college student from a low-SES, single-parent household, William understands the complexities and challenges that face similarly disadvantaged individuals. As a testament, his efforts to mentor students, many of whom have been first-generation college students, were recognized by the Psychology Honors program by naming him the 2022 Mentor of the Year. Through his work with Temple’s Graduate Student Union (TUGSA), William has sat on the Racial Justice Committee to address university representation issues, grievances, and engaged in labor action to support financially vulnerable graduate workers. William co-directs the Coding Outreach Group (COG), which teaches coding skills to Temple students through office hours, hands-on workshops, and generating open-source training resources. Free, easily accessible tools provide options to students who otherwise face economic barriers to develop these valuable skills. William and COG also extend their workshops and resources to work with local colleges and high schools in the Philadelphia community.

Despite hardships faced due to an underprivileged background, William has developed an extensive research repertoire. He has previously conducted research at Johns Hopkins University, the Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia, and most recently here at Temple University. In each role, William has recruited and retained diverse pools of participants by working around busy work schedules, coordinating transportation for study visits, and solving similar problems as needed. These sorts of challenges often limit research participation for individuals in low-SES contexts. He is committed to becoming an independent researcher, and his unique experiences not only offer new perspectives to psychological research but also act as a resource to promote and guide others from similar backgrounds. I believe these commitments align very well with the NIH’s interest in promoting diversity in the research community.

Sincerely,

Peter J. Marshall

Professor and Chair

Department of Psychology