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Ms. Kerry Oliver

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To Whom It May Concern,

Since I started my studies at Notre Dame, I have put a major focus on learning so that I could apply my work towards making the world a better place. I want to work at IDinsight because I believe that I can apply the skills I have developed in my Economics and International Development related classes towards projects that help alleviate poverty and improve quality of life in the developing world. I am interested in Associate role because I can combine my knowledge of evidence based projects and my coursework in economics towards projects at IDinsight.

When I arrived at the University of Notre Dame, I knew that I wanted to find ways to make a difference but was unsure about how to go about that. One of the things that fascinated me as I began studying International Development issues was the application of economics towards randomized control trials that use statistical evidence to find programs that work in development. As I learned more about this subject, I conducted a literature review of education related randomized trials in Africa. During the next semester, I used Stata to write an econometric paper that looked at the relationship between citizen trust and educational decision making. Studying these subjects made me want to go out into the field and learn more about how these types of interventions can make a difference.

As a Campaign Organizing Intern at Environment Virginia, I went to different cities and towns in Northern Virginia and talked to citizens about their environment related concerns in the state and in the nation. By initiating conversation by walking up to people and talking to them at local events, I was able to learn more about the motivations of individuals within a local community in regard to energy policy. While this experience was not in the developing world, I believe I can apply this type of work toward project application. Engaging with the local community is critical to a successful development project because locals must apply the changes to ensure that any intervention is sustainable after it takes place. This experience helped me get more accustomed to walking up to complete strangers in a new place and understanding how we could help accomplish their goals.

Ever since I started taking International Development related classes, I have had the goal of finding a way to work in the developing world. I truly believe that applying evidence based approaches to poverty solutions is a major step towards figuring out what interventions can make a difference and I believe I can apply my prior coursework and internship experience towards the evaluation of specific projects in the developing world.

Sincerely,

Zachary Spahr