

Letters of Recommendation

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Names of applicants, advisors, and schools have been changed for privacy.

EFFECTIVELY NEGATIVE LETTERS

"Damning with faint praise" The first letter contains negative words such as "mediocre", "surprisingly low score", "I feel comfortable recommending him". The second mentions spotty attendance, frustration, position in the top 60% which would infer the 59th percentile rather than the 99th percentile.

1. Please accept the following as a committee letter in support of the admission of Mickey Mouse into medical school. I have become well acquainted with Mickey during the past three years by way of my service as Pre-Health Professions Advisor at the University of P. Mickey recently completed a Bachelor of Science Degree in Biological Sciences and he has done quite well academically since deciding to pursue a career in medicine. The earliest portion of Mickey's academic record contains some mediocre grades, but Mickey went on to do well in the basic science classes that can serve as indicators of a candidate's potential for success in medical school coursework. I am aware of the surprisingly low score Mickey obtained on his initial attempt at the MCAT, but I am confident that Mickey will obtain a much higher score on the test following completion of adequate self-study. During his semesters at UP Mickey has displayed the maturity and communication skills essential for success as a medical student and physician. Mickey has used his medical volunteer and shadow opportunities to improve his understanding of health care delivery, and during our conversations he has revealed an impressive level of knowledge of local, national, and international aspects of medicine. Mickey's work as a mountaineering guide indicates that he is able to maintain his composure during very stressful situations; it is likely that he would remain productive no matter what kind of medical crisis he encountered. I am certain that medical personnel and patients will enjoy their interactions with Mickey and, because I do not feel that his low, MCAT score is a good indicator of his academic skills, I feel comfortable in recommending him for entry into medical school.
2. Please accept the following as a committee letter in support of the admission of Donald Duck into medical school. I have acted as Donald's pre-medical advisor for the past four years and also served as his Virology and Immunochemistry instructor. During his years at the University of N Donald and I occasionally met to discuss course schedules, topics in science, and the medical school application process.
Donald obtained a Bachelor of Science in Biology in a fairly efficient but academically unremarkable fashion, and did so while supporting himself and his family by working 3 jobs. Donald obtained "B" marks in my two courses, and, although he occasionally provided insightful comments during our classroom discussions, I found his spotty attendance and multitasking during class to be the more memorable features of his involvement. My frustration was largely due to my sense that Donald has the potential to become an exceptional scientist or clinician. Some of Donald's absenteeism may have been due to the demands of parenthood and a problem with insomnia that he has largely recovered from. Donald did obtain a very good score on the MCAT, and his accomplishments with his past coursework (perhaps along with having fewer outside responsibilities and distractions while in medical school in comparison to his undergraduate years) should leave Donald prepared for classroom success during the first two years of medical school. Donald is personable, and I have

noticed that he is popular amongst his peers. Donald's fondness for assisting others and his willingness to try new things may render him a leader amongst his medical school classmates. Donald served as my ... several months ago, and I was impressed by his professionalism; if Donald becomes a physician and interacts with his patients in a similar fashion, he will quickly develop a trusting clientele.

I feel that Donald is in the top 60% of premedical students that I have interacted with during the past decade.

ALL ABOUT THE WRITER – *almost nothing about the applicant*

The class presented an overview of human traditions. Folklore studies combine methods and theories from two disciplines: on the one hand, the study of literature, and on the other hand, anthropology. Thus the class satisfies university distribution requirements for both the social sciences and the humanities. Students had to read both primary and secondary sources; they were required to write response essays, and two completed two written essay examinations. Students also were required to participate in discussions, both in class and online. In large classes such as this one, individual students sometimes are difficult to remember, but Mr. D stood out as a valuable contributor in these discussions.

CONTEXT

Process:

1. **The** Pre-Health Advisory Committee of Z University consists of thirty five faculty representing many academic disciplines in the University College, Honors College, School of Allied Health, Division of Student Affairs, School of Medicine, and Colleges of Engineering, Humanities and Sciences, and Education. Our applicants submitted an application to participate in the process and interviewed before a two or three person panel. Each panel reviewed student's credentials, determined a ranking status, and drafted the attached letter of evaluation. The panels presented their letters and ranking status before the entire advisory committee for approval. While the committee letter is signed by the advisor who is assigned to work with the individual student, the opinions and evaluation in the committee letter reflect that of the Pre-Health Advisory Committee as a whole.
In determining letter content and ranking status our committee considers performance in science and non science classes, rigor of academic program, extra-curricular involvement, health care experience, maturity/professionalism, and communication skills. MCAT and DAT scores were not used by our committee in the evaluation of students.
2. The Pre-Professional Health Sciences Advisory Committee process for pre-health applicants includes a formal one-hour interview with the candidate. This letter represents a consensus of opinion from the Advisory Committee composed of faculty members across all disciplines. It is based on the interview, letters of recommendation, academic record, test scores, if available and personal contacts with the candidate in other settings. The additional letters of recommendation are solicited by the student and arrive confidentially to our office with a signed waiver. These requested letters are included in this committee packet and the right to see this packet has been waived by the applicant.

3. Attached are letters of evaluation for the applicant whose name appears above. Except for our committee letter, each of the attached letters was submitted independently from the others. Current students are not required to go through our committee process but most do. All current students are made aware of the opportunity to participate in the committee process. The enclosed statement explains our Pre-Health Advisory Committee process and provides statistics that I hope you will find helpful. Unless otherwise stated, the applicant has waived his/her right to inspect these letters or to learn the nature of their contents. The signed waiver statements are on file in the Office of Pre-Health Sciences Advising. Your acceptance of these letters for review constitutes an agreement that you will maintain their confidentiality.

4. At YU, pre-professional advising and counseling is done by a committee in the Division of Natural Sciences known as the Health Sciences Committee. Each student interested in a career in the health sciences may request an advisor from the committee. Together the student and advisor plan course work, assess progress and discuss general interests. At the time of the application, all students who desire a committee recommendation letter make their requests in writing. The student is asked to request letters of evaluation from others who also know them well and have these letters sent directly to our committee. One member of our committee then prepares a draft recommendation, drawing on information provided by the student, letters of recommendation submitted on behalf of the student, and personal knowledge gained from interaction with the student. This draft is reviewed, discussed and finally approved by the entire committee as the recommendation of the YU Health Sciences Committee.

5. The Board of Prehealth Advisors provides a committee letter for any X College student or graduate in the last four years who requests one. In addition to commenting on her academic performance, we point out other aspects of an applicant's experiences, accomplishments, capabilities and personal qualities. We rank applicants in general terms, and our recommendations fall into three groups, 'strong and enthusiastic,' 'strong,' and 'recommended.' Occasionally, we 'present' an applicant. In 2009, we provided committee letters for a total of 25 X College students / graduates who applied for 2010 entrance to human medical (22, allopathic and/or osteopathic) and dental schools (3). Of these, 7 were 'recommended,' 12 'strongly recommended' and 6 'strongly and enthusiastically recommended.' X College's Board of Prehealth Advisors has a policy of not writing committee letters for alumni/ae who graduated five or more years before submitting applications and have not had contact with us during the interval. Our reason for declining to provide a committee evaluation for these alumnae is that we do not have recent first-hand observations on which we can base a recommendation. That said, we are happy to provide advice to our alumni/ae and to write individual letters of reference in the behalf.

Rating System:

1. The rating system used by the Pre-Professional Health Sciences Advisory Committee process for pre-medical, dental, and veterinary medical school candidates is based on academic ability (GPA and Standardized test scores when available), leadership, reliability, altruism, concern demonstrated for others and a fit for the chosen health

profession. We use a descriptor term rating system for recommendation which compares this year's candidates to many years of W University pre-professional health science student applicants. The terms and their descriptions follow. A superior recommendation is given when an applicant is similar to past W University students who not only gained multiple United States medical, dental or other health professional school acceptances but was also given numerous scholarship offers by accepting institutions. This is truly a superior student in every category and we typically have from one to no more than three of these of students each year.

The next category is an excellent recommendation. This applicant is similar to past W University students who gained multiple United States medical, dental or other health professional school acceptances. The majority of the candidates we advise will likely fall into this category.

The next category is for the committee to highly recommend the applicant. This applicant is similar to past W University students who gained at least a single United States medical, dental or other health professional school acceptance based on a wide range of school applications. There will also be a few of our candidates in this category each year.

The next category is for the committee to recommend the applicant. This applicant is similar to past W University students who were accepted to an international health professional school(s) and have an unlikely chance of an acceptance at a single United States medical, dental or other health professional school. Very few candidates we advise will fall into this category.

Finally the committee has established a not recommend category since we do not prohibit students from applying to professional health schools. We advise them as to their chance of acceptance based on our past experiences with other W University students. Since we are not an admissions committee, it is not our final say as to their suitability; however we could use this category of recommendation if warranted. We have never yet needed to use this category because advising is so highly prized by our students and our committee.

2. This year we interviewed and evaluated 166 students who will be applying to medical or dental schools for the class that begins in the Fall, 2011. Students who interviewed before the committee were required to have a minimum 3.2 cumulative GPA and complete a minimum of 25 hours of undergraduate coursework at ZU to participate in the process. The table below summarizes the placement of these students in our five recommendation categories.

	N	%
Highly Recommended	39	29
Recommended with Confidence	65	31
Recommended	35	23
Recommended with Reservations	19	13
Not Recommended	8	4

The table below summarizes the placement of applicants (N=398) in our five recommendation categories into medical and dental schools for the past five years (2006-2010).

Highly Recommended	110	94% accepted
Recommended with Confidence	115	85% accepted
Recommended	107	13% accepted
Recommended with Reservations	42	1% accepted
Not Recommended	24	0% accepted

SECTION 2 (to be completed by evaluator)

FACTORS	SUPERIOR TOP 5%	EXCELLENT NEXT 10%	VERY GOOD NEXT 15%	GOOD NEXT 20%	FAIR NEXT 30%	POOR BOTTOM 20%	CANNOT JUDGE
INTELLECTUAL ABILITY <i>intelligence, general ability to succeed in academic effort</i>	✓						
MATURITY <i>personal development, ability to cope with life situations</i>	✓						
EMOTIONAL STABILITY <i>performance under pressure, mood stability, constancy in ability to relate to others</i>	✓						
INTERPERSONAL RELATIONS <i>ability to get along with others, rapport, cooperativeness</i>	✓						
EMPATHY <i>sensibility to the needs of others, consideration, tactfulness</i>	✓						
JUDGEMENT <i>ability to analyze a problem, common sense, decisiveness</i>	✓						
RESOURCEFULNESS <i>originality, skillful management of available resources, problem-solving skills</i>	✓						
RELIABILITY <i>dependency, accuracy, sense of responsibility, promptness, conscientiousness</i>		✓					
COMMUNICATION SKILLS- WRITTEN <i>ability to write clearly, spell correctly, and to express ideas effectively</i>	✓						
COMMUNICATION SKILLS- ORAL <i>ability to express ideas effectively, to carry on a conversation, and to be a good listener</i>	✓						
PERSISTENCE <i>stamina, endurance, finishes tasks begun, determination</i>	✓						
SELF-CONFIDENCE <i>Assuredness, awareness of own strengths and weaknesses</i>	✓						

INCORPORATING OTHERS' IMPRESSIONS*X College – academics:*

R O, a Professor of Biological Sciences and Neuroscience found Jane to be, “... *an unusually diligent, conscientious student whose hard work made her one of the top three or four students (in a class of 31) in my Neurophysiology course.*” Providing detailed comments on her strengths with exam material and written work, he points to her level of preparedness in lab, “...*Jane and her [lab] partner were always extremely well prepared for their experiment, worked expeditiously, and through their efficiency often finished all their work an hour or so before the other groups.*” Dr. O had additional opportunity to observe Jane’s diligence when she visited him during office hours commenting that, “*She would bring with her an amazing re-written set of lecture notes that included annotated images from the handouts and course website. The purpose of her visit would be to clarify a few minor details that she wasn’t sure she had gotten right.*”

Professor MH had Jane as a student in two courses:

During one course in which students practice reading journal articles, and then design and conduct experiments, Dr. found Jane's, "...*written work was excellent, clear and thoughtful. She applied herself to the statistical analysis and the critical reading exercises with enthusiasm. I could see she appreciates a challenge and enjoys gaining new skills.*" Among the very top students of a highly selected group of upper classmen enrolled in the other course, Jane performed extremely well in a small group setting, able "*to effectively share the responsibilities and accomplish the goals. She organized several classes focused on genetic and environmental causes of >>> Disease and was able to gather and post appropriate readings in a timely manner, and to lead discussions that were lively while also covering the basic background information. She has excellent abilities to analytically critique a scientific article.*"

Dr. H found Jane's performance on the two final projects, a NIH style research proposal and a podcast for the general public, to be "*stellar.*"

Dr. H, Ph.D. has known Jane as a NSF funded research intern in his laboratory for about three years. During this time Jane made substantial contributions on two separate projects, Described as "*very nice work,*" she dissected ...and then used ...to demonstrate a key piece of preliminary evidence for an NIH grant he was recently awarded. Jane prepared a poster describing this data and presented it, entirely by herself, at the 2007 national meeting of the American Society for +++. During a second project Jane assisted on pilot studies in 2007 in which she isolated ...and performed all the Her work resulted in being asked to "*train another undergraduate to do those steps, and she did so very efficiently.*" Dr. H found Jane to be, "*thoughtful and personable, and she can demonstrate both leadership and teamwork as the situation requires. If she wished to pursue a graduate degree I would welcome her to continue in my lab.*"

This work led to an award that fully funded a trip to the Society for ... Conference in Washington, DC.

Jane has been working in Dr. K's office as a Clinical Assistant/Assistant Office Manager and still he finds it hard to keep her sufficiently challenged as he watches her take on more and more responsibility. She has numerous qualities that he believes set her apart from other students seeking medical school. The first relates to her commitment to working in rural family medicine focusing on pediatrics. Both Dr. K and another ER physician who have worked with her agree, "*This is a young woman who was made to be a doctor. It's in her heart, and it's who she is.*" The second relates to her role in his office which he compares to that of a resident, seeing all of his patients, conducting detailed histories and managing most of the logistics of their care. "*My patients love her because of her positive energy.*" His letter shows a personal fondness and respect for Jane's work and commitment to rural health care, "*From her work in the remote villages to her weekly work in the underserved pediatric wards here in..., Jane's work rises to the level that is best described as community activism. She has made a real difference.*"

ORGANIZATION INTO DOMAINS

X College:

On behalf of the members of the X College Board of Prehealth Advisors, I write to recommend Jane Doe for admission to medical school. Jane is a diligent, conscientious, intelligent, hardworking student possessing strong leadership skills and a passion for rural health care delivery. She is

self-motivated, shows a deep interest in applying scientific knowledge to clinical problems and consistently focuses on patient well-being.

ACADEMICS: Jane graduated from X College in the spring of 2009 having completed a major in neuroscience with a Liberal Arts Commendation. She was named to the Dean's List in recognition of her academic work during three of the four years she was enrolled at X. Due a medical leave of absence during the fall of her third year, she was ineligible for the Dean's List but returned with a GPA of 3.9 the following spring. She entered the college with numerous awards and scholarships. Jane also received the ::: Award recognizing her volunteer work with natives in a remote village she visited in 2003.

She has honed her research skills from many research experiences along with her courses, and is currently a well-trained young scientist. Jane was recruited to X in the prestigious ~~~ program and immediately began working in the neuroscience lab of Dr. B (8/2005 – 5/2007). She conducted experiments related to ... and this research ultimately led to a Howard Hughes Medical Institute award that allowed her research to continue during the summer of 2007. By the end of her two years in his laboratory, she had mastered numerous techniques including Her work in this lab led to two presentations, one at the annual... Conference and the other at the ...Conference.

SERVICE: Jane was active in both community service and extracurricular arenas in the X College community. She was leader of the community service program in her residence hall and volunteered during the fall semester of her second year at a nearby Nursing Home. As a cross-country runner for X in 2005, her ability to manage academics and athletics was recognized by the NCAA Cross Country Coaches Association All Academic Running Team and the Regional conference Women's Cross Country All-Conference Team.

CLINICAL EXPOSURE: Even before entering X, Jane began acquiring clinical experiences. She began volunteering in the NICU at XYZ Medical Center (2003 – present) and has accumulated more than 130 volunteer hours. Her efforts there include comforting premature babies, assisting nurses and being on call for infants during their final hours. She also mentored with a Pediatric Surgeon, Dr. J, serving as a clinical intern observing in the operating room, in his clinic, and during hospital rounds(1/2003 – 5/2003). It was during this, her first experience in a patient care setting, that she became committed to the challenge and excitement of becoming a physician.

Outside the classroom and laboratory, Jane has sought clinical experience by volunteering as a Clinical Research Intern at ABC Medical Center's Level 1 Trauma Center (9/2006- 5/2007). She was responsible for screening incoming trauma center patients to determine their eligibility for studies on cellulitis and abscesses, glucose intolerance, and congestive heart failure. If it was determined that a patient met the criteria and consented, Jane worked with them using applicable instruments. Examples include a new EKG vest for those with congestive heart disease and an infrared thermography laser to measure skin temperature differences between diagnosed cases of cellulitis and abscesses.

RESEARCH: Jane has been similarly active during her undergraduate summers. She sought out work in Dr. H's laboratory at Z University by convincing him that her previous lab experience would be a valuable asset to his studies on This position, which initially began in the summer of 2007 and was funded by an award from the National Science Foundation's Research Experience for Undergraduates (REU) program, continued throughout the fall of 2007 as Jane needed to remain nearer to home in order to receive medical treatment. Jane returned to the lab as a volunteer in the summer of 2008. She worked 30-40 hours a week in the lab learning several new techniques including As a participant in some of Dr. Hs pilot studies with ...Jane presented preliminary

findings to the faculty. Based on that presentation, she was chosen among all of the other REU students to present this research at the Society for ...

ADDITIONAL EXPERIENCE: Since graduation, she has worked as a Medical Assistant in the Women's Clinic (5/2009 –9/2009) to convert the clinic's paper charts to an electronic medical records system. The benefits included learning a great deal of medical terminology, becoming facile with an EMR, and gaining valuable insight into an OB-GYN practice as well as medical management of pregnancies. She also worked with medical students and understood fully the purpose of 3rd and 4th year rotations. She has worked as an on-call personal care provider for a partial quadriplegic (9/2009- 11/2009) during weekend evenings. She would dispense medications, reposition the patient in bed, help with a CPAP respiratory machine, or any other task as needed. More recently she has been working as a Medical Assistant for an interventional anesthesiologist who conducts spinal procedures for patients suffering from debilitating pain (11/2009 – present). Dr K has taught her how to perform nerve conduction studies and assist during spinal procedures including preparation of the procedure room, starting IVs, and taking vitals. The following quotations from the attached letters describe Jane's accomplishments, capabilities, and personal attributes, and provide evidence for the committee's recommendation.

In summary, Jane has demonstrated diligence, academic capability, research competence and commitment to patients in clinical settings. Through her volunteerism, her vision to become a physician in rural underserved areas has been consistently demonstrated. Jane is thoughtful and inquisitive, making the most of all learning experiences she encounters. She is professional, takes initiative, works hard and is resourceful making her well-liked. As a volunteer, a clinical or research intern, or a medical assistant, all of those who are fortunate to come in contact with Jane find her sense of purpose and determination refreshing. Jane has never wavered in her goal of becoming a rural physician and she remains steadfast and committed to the work. Thus, on the basis of her well demonstrated capabilities and accomplishments, fine personal attributes, and her strong motivation to become a physician, the members of the X College Board of Prehealth Advisors recommend Jane Doe for admission to medical school.

V College:

To Whom It May Concern:

On behalf of several V College faculty and others, I am writing this composite letter of evaluation in strong and enthusiastic support of the application of Clara Barton, V College Class of 2008, to medical school. While summarizing the inputs of others to her candidacy, I also include a review of my extensive contact with Clara in two undergraduate courses including multiple contacts with her outside of the classroom. I also draw on my 40 years of teaching of medical and undergraduate students both here and at T Medical School and on my role as the faculty leader of pre-health programs at V to affirm what all of her writers agree on, namely that Clara is an outstanding candidate for medical school admission. I will divide my comments about Clara into three areas: her academic accomplishments, her extracurricular interests, and a number of outstanding personal characteristics which, taken together, uniformly reflect on the outstanding strengths of her candidacy.

Academic Accomplishments

Clara graduated from V College in June, 2008, having majored in Biology with a minor in Chemistry. With a near perfect GPA (3.90), she graduated *summa cum laude* and with election to Phi Beta Kappa. She was also named a *** scholar during her tenure here. Her classroom performance was also marked by three course citations. Citations are given at V for outstanding performance in the classroom and most students covet receiving one during their time here. Clara's receiving three, particularly in three different disciplines (Biology, Chemistry, Classical Studies), attest to her outstanding attendance at scholarship. Her facility in the disciplines abutting on

a medical education is also testified to by an outstanding performance on the MCAT examination. Her academic prowess is also reflected in strong letters of support from three V faculty. Professor AG taught in a spring course in her senior year entitled The Molecular Basis of Cancer, which is taught at a high level to both undergraduates and Ph.D. students at V and is a rigorous class which depends heavily on the reading of the literature and discussion. Professor G notes that Clara was "an inquisitive and energetic presence in the class". She was "prepared, engaged and actively contributed and was fearless in her questioning". With written work nearly always at the top of the class, she remained positive and excited about the material until the end of the term, was quick with clarifying questions, and appropriately critical of data presented in the papers. Similar comments come from Professor G G commenting on Clara's performance in organic chemistry, where she missed being the top student in the class by only 3 points out of a possible 500. He notes her "outstanding command of the material and excellent work ethic". In the laboratory portion of the course, she was one of the top students, who worked independently, was not afraid to ask questions, and was always contributing thoughtful and correct answers. In his course citation Professor G simply notes "a smashing performance"!! Her strength in the classroom was not limited to the natural sciences. Professor N C of the French and Italian Department taught Clara in a class in the Women and Gender Studies curriculum. Professor C notes that "Clara rose to the challenge of questioning assumptions and was able to initiate and participate in wide ranging conversations". She was "intellectually and emotionally adaptable in the best and most serious way and her classroom work and written assignments were of the highest caliber". In noting an "active desire to comprehend and explore what was unfamiliar to her", Clara was thoroughly at home in a non-science course.

I had the pleasure of teaching Clara in two undergraduate courses, a mid-level biology major course in endocrinology and a senior seminar, which is, in essence, an advanced biochemistry course. In the spring of her junior year she enrolled in my endocrinology course, a course that is taught at a high level of rigor and expectation. Probing extensively in the endocrine literature, students are expected to synthesize in a hypothesis-based problem-solving mode the topic of endocrinology from multiple perspectives including cell biology, genetics, biochemistry, physiology and pathophysiology. This performance overall placed her second in a very talented group of 46 students. Not only did she do well on course examinations and problem sets, but wrote a superb critical and analytical paper reviewing a publication in *The New England Journal of Medicine* on the effects of long-term bisphosphonate therapy on osteoporosis. She was always an active participant in the classroom and always brought critical elements to many of the discussions that we had. The same demeanor and approach to scholarship was evident in the winter of her senior year when she enrolled in my Molecular Mysteries of Human Biology class. This class consisted of the very best of the senior biology majors, many of whom have already gone on to the very best medical schools. Clara's performance again placed her very nearly at the top of the class. Relying on the analysis of the biochemical literature and correlating that with physiologic and pathophysiologic consequence, Clara's performance on problem sets was particularly impressive. In addition, she was required to present with one other student to the class for one hour on a paper that I chose from the literature. On exploration of the topic of exercise, Clara was assigned a paper from *The Journal of Biological Chemistry* looking at the impact of ... on the exercise response. Her presentation was superb; particularly in the way that she culled complex information into a comprehensible and thoroughly enjoyable presentation to the rest of the class. Taken together, my exposure to Clara in these two courses indicates not only her considerable intellect and her knowledge base of biology, but importantly her ability to communicate that information effectively to others in a critical and thorough way. Thus, from my purview and the purview of others, there is no doubt that Clara has all the tools to succeed in any medical school classroom.

Extracurricular Interests

Outside of the classroom while at V, Clara was an effective teaching assistant in the Chemistry Department and participated in a tutoring program in our Academic Skills Center. While

she came to V with an initial interest in veterinary medicine and was important in organizing many activities around animal welfare on the V campus and being an intern at S University in a veterinary laboratory, her interest turned to human medicine. Here she participated in our Surgical Volunteer program in our Medical Center, where students interacted with Same Day Surgery patients and their families in helping to coordinate their care. She also participated in our shadowing program, learning at the bedside and in the clinic about medicine from the inside. Subsequent to her graduation, she has sought employment in her native state. Building on a prior internship there, she has been supervised by Dr. JS who lauds Clara for the many contributions to his neurology practice. While assisting in the handling of patients, she has also worked on two research papers with Dr. S at which time she displayed "excellent critical thinking and analysis skills". Being an integral member of the staff there since July, 2009, she has functioned as a receptionist with "extreme conscientiousness and organization. She has also shown excellent verbal communication skills and a calm demeanor that allowed her to interact with patients. Over the past year, in reviewing diagnostic testing with Dr. S, Clara's intellectual ability, gained from her comprehension of her premedical studies, has been on display. Noting that she also has a professional attitude and a great sense of humor, Dr. S is very enthusiastic about recommending her for a career in medicine.

Personal Characteristics

Clara grew up on a farm in the middle of the woods and developed a set of values certainly reflected in all the comments in her supporting letters. Adjectives and phrases used to describe her include mature, sincere, very warm in every interaction, self-assured, smart and engaging, delightful and cheerful, sophisticated and sensitive. An extremely bright young woman, she is at the same time hard-working and enthusiastic about whatever she undertakes. Her ability to work with others has been well on display; one could certainly see her being a centerpiece of student interactions in any medical school classroom. Furthermore, she has the sensitivity, dedication and demeanor that will make her an outstanding patient physician.

In summary, Clara is an outstanding candidate for admission to any medical school. Possessed of superior academic skills and complemented by formative extracurricular experiences and outstanding personal characteristics, she will be a highlight of any medical school class matriculating in the fall of 2011. Therefore, she comes to you with our very highest recommendation. If you have any further questions regarding Clara, do not hesitate to contact me.

SAME APPLICANT/DIFFERENT WRITERS

Minnie's letters are both from individuals, not a committee. Note how the second writer mostly writes about his lab rather than giving as much information about Minnie as is gleaned from the first letter.

Applicant: Minnie Mouse

Writer #1 I am very pleased to recommend Minnie Mouse for medical school. I first met Minnie when she was a freshman at the University of M. I run an outreach program that supports under-represented students interested in the life sciences, and as a pre-med student, Minnie fit right in. I have been her adviser since I met her, and she has been absolutely unwavering about her goal to become a physician. Her transcript speaks for itself. She has taken a heavy science course load, been on the Dean's List, and has taken Honors courses, all while double-majoring in Biochemistry and Biology. Her academic accomplishments are a direct result of her focus, discipline, attitude, and intelligence. What her transcript doesn't tell you is that while achieving such excellence she has participated in a wide variety of activities to prepare herself for medical school, and to stay deeply connected with her heritage. Her transcript also does not hint at her vibrant and positive personality.

Minnie worked two jobs while going to school: one at a restaurant, and the other conducting human genetics research; she is continuing her research work full-time now that she

has graduated.. In the lab, she is working on a large-scale multi-institutional project to identify all of the functional elements in the human genome. Minnie's contribution is mapping and classifying ### sites using high-throughput sequencing.

She regularly volunteers as a peer mentor, and spends many, many hours each summer as a volunteer at Camp ^^^, a residential camp for children with cancer and their families.

This volunteer experience is particularly important to her since she hopes to become a pediatric oncologist; it has given her perspective on how cancer affects not only the child, but their entire extended family. She has seen how each family responds differently, and has learned to be aware of and sensitive to, complex family dynamics.

Minnie has honed her sportsmanship and leadership skills through many years of competitive Lacrosse. In addition, she has her black belt, and is a very accomplished singer and folk dancer. For Minnie, folk dancing isn't just about the immediate joy of dancing; it is a visceral connection to her heritage, and is as important to her as breathing.

Minnie has a phenomenal work ethic, a sincere and deep interest in the life sciences, and a long-standing dedication to her goal of becoming a physician. She truly enjoys sharing what she has learned, an attribute that will make her a terrific role model for younger students.

Minnie is willing to push herself to achieve something difficult, rather than shying away, or trying to find a way around a problem. Her summer 2010 medical volunteering trip to Central America is a classic example of Minnie deliberately putting herself in a situation where she can stretch and grow, even when it is uncomfortable.

Her job-shadowing experience in the summer of 2008 was a tremendous experience. She quickly gained the confidence of the surgeons and other clinicians, and as such was given much more responsibility than any of them initially anticipated. Minnie told me about one case that gave her a very broad and thorough picture of medicine. A patient came in while she was working in the angiogram unit, and she was involved in the imaging process of this patient's heart. It was determined that he needed surgery quickly, and Minnie was fortunate enough to be an observer during the surgery. Later, she was involved in his care and recovery as she shadowed his physicians, until the patient was well enough to leave the hospital. She was able to be a part of his care from practically the moment he came into the hospital until he was discharged. This experience gave her the "big picture" view of medicine from the standpoint of a single patient. Minnie has the maturity and vision to see both the individual perspective, and the larger issues at stake, and we had a deep and complex discussion about many of the issues involved in both.

In the summer of 2009, she interned at a hospital in a foreign country, in a pediatric oncology unit.

This experience really brought home to her the difference between medical care in the United States, and in other parts of the world. Country x is not a third-world country, yet some of the resources available to patients are very similar to third-world conditions. The success rate in the oncology unit was very high, but only a handful of patients were accepted, and they were to stay in the hospital for several months so their follow-up could be monitored carefully. Minnie wondered: how were these patients chosen? Was it money? Family connection? Likelihood of survival? What happened to those children who were not selected? She could only imagine....

From my 25 years experience in working with undergraduate students in life sciences, I am absolutely certain that Minnie will become an outstanding physician and will represent your medical school well. She is an extraordinary young woman who has the intellectual horsepower to do amazing research and healthcare, and has the personal skills to make positive changes in our healthcare system. She will be a dynamic leader, and has my highest recommendation.

Applicant: Minnie Mouse

WRITER #2

I am glad to write this letter of recommendation for Minnie Mouse who is applying for admission to your Medical School. Minnie is an exceptional person, an excellent student, a dedicated research worker, a black belt martial artist and a dancer. She is also a great person to have in the lab.

Minnie joined my laboratory as an undergraduate researcher in September 2008. She had essentially no technical experience in molecular biology but she proved to be a very quick learner. She initially became a member of the group which works on the validation of regulatory elements detected in the context of the major xxx project. But we soon assigned to her her own project that focused on the development of an approach for detection of human chromatin insulators. These are elements that essentially guarantee the normal function of the genome during development and differentiation and, on the translation level, they are components of gene therapy vectors. A second project she has been involved together with other students is focused on the genomic detection of enhancers.

Minnie performed very well as a research undergraduate and upon graduation we employed her as a technician in our group. She temporarily continued her participation in the project on enhancers but her main project is on the genetics of ancient populations that initiated the first civilizations of Europeans. This is a project requiring extremely careful and meticulous research, and from her past performance, I judged that Minnie is the right person to be involved. This will be the focus of her research until she leaves the laboratory to start her medical studies.

In summary, Minnie is an outstanding young woman, very dependable and tremendously motivated. She has multiple talents and has a great personality. She is a very hard worker and excellent utilizer of her time in the lab. She has a strong desire to become a physician and I am sure that she possesses all the qualities that will help her become an excellent doctor.

Applicant: Indiana Jones

Indiana's letters are from an individual and from a committee. Although the committee letter is quite positive, it ends with placing Indiana in "the top 50%". This is confusing to the reader and leaves one wondering what the writer would say about someone in the top 10 %.

Writer #1

I am writing in support of the medical school application of Indiana Jones. It is a tremendous pleasure to write on behalf of Indiana and to recommend him highly. In preparation for writing this letter, I had the opportunity to read Indiana's updated resume and the summary of his employment and volunteer activities. I have long been and continue to be impressed with Indiana taking full advantage of his undergraduate years: creating a record of academic accomplishment, devoting numerous hours to extracurricular research activity, and amassing hundreds of hours of community service. Until I read Indiana's personal statement for the first time, I was not aware of the details of his very difficult early life. His compassion and tremendous resilience will stand him in good stead as he faces the challenges of medical school and as a medical doctor.

I have known Indiana for about six years - since he took a Child Development course and lab from me in the spring of 2004. He earned A's in both classes. Long after the course was over, Indiana would contact me from time to time with follow-up questions on child development in the interest of his two younger brothers. Indiana's talent as a student extends beyond the psychology classes for which I was the instructor. While attending L University Indiana was on the Dean's List five times. He graduated with an overall grade-point-average of 3.48 (on a 4.00-point scale), despite the many challenging courses he completed. In May of 2009, Indiana graduated with two baccalaureate degrees - a B.S. in Biology and a B.S. in Chemistry - and minors in Mathematics and Spanish.

In addition to his academic accomplishments, Indiana has a history of community service. During the spring of 2004, he contributed a number of volunteer hours to an after-school program for impoverished children. Indiana has also worked as a mathematics/chemistry tutor and Supplementary Instructor at LU. During summer of 2007, Indiana worked full time as an Intern Supervisor working with Native youth from impoverished backgrounds. He followed up with additional volunteer hours during his National Student Exchange experience. During the fall of 2007, Indiana contributed 100 hours of volunteer work to the &&& Retirement Community, facilitating recreation activities for the elderly. More recently, Indiana contributed 180 hours as a Children's Hospital volunteer at *** Medical Center a number of those hours were spent cradling recovering infants in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit. Indiana has consistently demonstrated enthusiasm for working with and providing assistance to people of all ages. In addition to his aforementioned academic and community service accomplishments, Indiana also devotes considerable time to serving as a mentor to his two younger brothers.

Beyond being highly motivated, intellectually talented, and generous of spirit, Indiana is unerringly personable, respectful, and strongly committed to doing his best work and living by the personal values he has adopted. Within the Psychology Department at LU, we are presently engaged in an effort to encourage professionalism among our majors in the hope that more students at this University will emulate student role models such as Indiana. On one occasion, I noted Indiana talking to an admired and very accomplished retired colleague. It quickly became eminently clear that the professor with whom Indiana was conversing, valued Indiana's intellectual talent, work ethic, emotional intelligence, and interpersonal skills as much as I do.

In summary, Indiana is well prepared for medical school by virtue of his demonstrated resilience, work ethic, intellectual talent, and academic preparation. Indiana will inevitably take full advantage of all of the training opportunities available in medical school; it is a hallmark of the way Indiana conducts himself - missing no opportunities to better himself. In addition, Indiana's emotional intelligence and compassion will stand him in good stead as an advocate for his patients and an overseer of their health and well-being.

Writer #2 Indiana Jones

It is my pleasure to prepare a committee letter with packet in support of the entry of Indiana Jones into medical school. During the past eight years I have served as Indiana's pre-health professions advisor during his completion of undergraduate degrees in biology and chemistry. Indiana and I met frequently during this interval, and I am quite familiar with his aptitude for science and medicine. Indiana has a strong academic record (his overall OPA is currently 3.48), and he has done quite well in biology and chemistry courses. Indiana was selected to serve as a science tutor for pre-nursing students, and I was told by a School of Nursing staff member that Indiana was an effective teacher and had a very good rapport with the students. Indiana was also recruited by the LU departments of Biology and Chemistry to serve as a tutor, and this is an indication of his mastery of the material as well as his interpersonal and communication skills. I received considerable feedback concerning the physiological research Indiana carried out during Summer 2007; Indiana's mentor was impressed with his intellect, attention to detail, and ability to effectively discuss science topics.

Indiana has the academic preparation necessary for success in medical school. Along with his intellectual accomplishments, Indiana possesses a striking level of integrity and a profound work ethic. Indiana seems to be a particularly conscientious individual, and my only concern is that Indiana is too thoughtful at times when a spontaneous decision may be desirable.

I have often thought of Indiana as being a particularly selfless person, and he has a sincere interest in the provision of community service. He spent the summer of 2007 serving as a youth advocate, and during his involvement Indiana mentioned several times that his work with the children provided a considerable amount of satisfaction. Indiana's personality is genuine in a way that should instill comfort and confidence in his patients. Indiana's health care experience includes work with underserved groups in two states. In order to improve his ability to work with Spanish-speaking

patients, Indiana spent a semester in Spain that involved the completion of university courses taught in Spanish. Indiana's discussion of his shadow and volunteer opportunities indicate that he is fairly well informed concerning health care delivery in both rural and urban areas, and he has displayed an impressive ability to adapt to new locations and situations. I place Indiana in the top 50% of the past decade's premedical students from our institution.

Applicant: Albert Einstein

These two letters are from individuals. The first letter details many negative aspects of Albert's past performance and even though it ends on a high note, the initial negatives are distracting. Could (should?) this letter have been written differently?

Writer #1

I am pleased to write this letter of recommendation for Mr. Albert Einstein - an applicant for admission to various Medical School Programs. I support Albert's application for admission without reservation. His academic work for me has been excellent and he is fully qualified in terms of preparation, active research, and practical application. Over the last year, he has worked in the trenches as an EMT. This work experience has refocused his desire to be a pediatrician. Let me explain his renewed focus. I have known Albert for five years. His academic work has always been excellent. But he lacked passion for his work, and his success was shallow. In last year's round of medical school applications, he represented himself as driven by laboratory science. His scope was narrow and lacking the creativity and problem solving necessary for a physician-in-training. He was devastated by his rejections.

Now after a year of rethinking, he now seeks to become a physician so as to contribute to community level health care with under privileged and under-represented children. In Albert's case, his reaction to adversity was to refocus and recommit passionately to the life work of physician, in essence, to find and elevate self through serving the under-served. His EMT work has opened up new worlds for him. Albert is still easy going, but he is more balanced and articulate about why he seeks to serve via medicine.

In his capacity as an EMT, he has learned to engage a huge range of others. If he was a bright but arrogant honors student in the past, he is now driven to serve others in a humble, non-patronizing way. His ego and skill set have been expanded and embellished by his first taste of emergency medicine. This growing tool kit and awareness will take him far in clinical and community medicine environments. Albert now has a vision of, and for, physician as his life work. He has substance and value. And he lives this path as a code. He will bring this code with him - be it lab work, rotations, or volunteering with families and communities.

As a bright and critical intellectual, Albert has always seen power in the details. Now he seeks to transform medical theory into the most pragmatic application in under-served communities. While Albert's vitae of merit scholarships and leadership awards is not overly long or prestigious, his determination and focus for clinical application now seems far reaching. I know that he will test his assumptions at the most basic level.

As a mature candidate with EMT work in his system, he knows he cannot change the world or its problems. But in his application and in discussions, he demonstrates that he can, and will, effect many small differences. As a broker of the public world of trauma, Albert has now become an aficionado of cultural differences. Wherever he works, he is comfortable.

Albert has proven himself to be a well rounded student. He has demonstrated the problem solver's *mantra* - an eye for detail, the capacity for reasoning at conceptual levels, and critical application. He places emphasis on the tools of critical reading and technical writing. He is a deductive theory-seeker and is not afraid to fail. He uses concepts as tools of explanation. If they lack utility, he discards them and finds new ones.

In sum, Mr. Albert Einstein is a fine student and at ease in a range of environments. He has always been scientifically focused. Now after a year of rejection and rethinking, he seeks to become a physician so as to serve the under privileged. In Albert's case, adversity has refocused his passion

to be a physician. In the last year, his EMT work has opened up new worlds and pragmatic codes. He now grasps that medical knowledge is both resource and power for his life work. I place him among the top 8% of undergraduate pre-med students I have had in my career. I support his application for medical school without question.

Applicant: Albert Einstein
Writer #2

I have known Albert Einstein for 2 years because he was the primary swim coach of my master's swim team, a lifeguard, and swim instructor at the !!! Country Club, where he provided individual swim lessons to my pre-school aged daughter.

As a coach and leader, Albert was confident without being arrogant, authoritative without being aggressive, and encouraging without being overly effusive. He had an impressive ability to identify what motivated each individual swimmer and he showed finesse in the way he used that knowledge to help each swimmer improve strokes, or time, or both.

Albert showed consistent enthusiasm and a positive attitude despite a rigorous class schedule, which was particularly impressive during his EMT training. He always went above and beyond his coaching responsibilities by helping with individual strokes after swim team, organizing group functions, and participating in swim team events. It was this self-directed motivation that allowed him to get to know many of us as colleagues and friends,

Albert was a great children's swim instructor and very deliberate in his approach to teach skills within a context, making swimming a fun experience. I was impressed with his maturity and ability to assess each child's readiness and find an approach that worked for him/her. Although seemingly straightforward, it is a challenging position to be in due to the nature of balancing parents' expectations with a child's ability and motivation. It requires clear communication skills, tremendous interpersonal capabilities, and much integrity.

With over 20 years in the medical field, it is my impression that Albert Einstein would make an excellent physician - using facts to clearly communicate with patients, while considering the facts within the larger context of the patient's life, thus enabling him to be a true care-provider.

I strongly recommend Albert Einstein for admission to medical school. I believe he would be an asset to the medical field.

SAME WRITER/DIFFERENT APPLICANTS

The first applicant is "recommended" whereas the second applicant receives a "highest recommendation". Both sound pretty positive. Fortunately, these letters come with an explanation of criteria for each type of recommendation.

Applicant: Mel Brooks

To Whom It May Concern:

This is a committee letter of recommendation for Mel Brooks, who is applying to medical school. Mel graduated from High School in June 1998 and entered B University in the fall of that same year. He took a leave from BU in spring 2002 and returned in the spring of 2007. Mel graduated in December 2007 with a major in Political Science and minors in both Biology and Chemistry. He is currently working as a Certified Nursing Assistant at the Veterans' Home and as a server at a popular restaurant in town. Mel is a mature student with good academic ability. His professor for Microbiology writes:

"From early on, Mel set himself apart from the other students. He performed consistently well on exams and assignments, he participated in class discussions, and he generally showed great interest and competency in science. It was clear to me that Mel was investing a great deal of time into internalizing the course material, and his efforts ultimately earned him an A- in the course, a very good grade for this class. I know that, while taking my class, he also was taking a rather difficult biochemistry class. I frequently saw him synthesizing the information from biochemistry and incorporating that knowledge into microbiology as well. In my opinion, being able to transfer knowledge from one area to another, rather than keeping knowledge compartmentalized, is a sign of an excellent student with much promise. I feel that Mel's tenacity, in combination with his ability to synthesize knowledge from multiple sources, will serve him well in a medical career."

Mel's professor for Biochemistry was equally impressed, writing the following about his research paper and laboratory work:

“The purpose of the ‘research paper’ assignment was to explain the mechanism and regulation of an enzyme involved in metabolism. Mel quickly understood my expectations for this assignment and he demonstrated a level of independence that was highly satisfactory. He wrote an excellent paper and capped his project with a fine oral presentation. Mel's performance throughout this assignment confirms that he is a strong science student who acts responsibly about his learning.”

In the laboratory portion of Chem 405, Mel demonstrated that he has strong hands-on, problem-solving, and team-player skills. Several of the Chem 405 experiments were based on primary research articles and this presented students with a few challenges that they had not encountered in experiments of the "cookbook" type. Mel welcomed these challenges. He was able to focus on the complex problems at hand, identify possible solutions, and apply a thoughtful reasoning to choose the solution most likely to succeed. Both of Mel's professors quoted above know him from courses that he took in spring 2007 after resuming his studies at BU. It is worth noting that Mel's academic performance during that semester is markedly better than in the semesters during his prior time at BU. This, we believe, speaks to the additional maturity and drive possessed by Mel now that he has settled upon his chosen career goal. A professor in the Political Science department who also knows Mel writes:

“Mel has consistently impressed me with his earnest commitment to his education, and the diligence with which he has pursued his studies in my courses... Mel is motivated and focused. As his personal statement submitted as part of his application demonstrates, his ambitions to become a physician are long-standing and arise from personal commitments and experiences deep enough to provide him with the determination the successful completion of medical school will demand.”

Mel's interest in medicine stems largely from personal circumstances that affected him deeply. His older sister was born with brain damage that left her with communication disabilities and a tendency toward grand mal seizures. Mel's motivation toward medicine arises in part from the compassion he has for his sister and the care he has given her throughout his life. Mel's compassionate nature has extended beyond caring for his sister, however. In high school he volunteered with the Special Olympics. He also volunteered at a homeless shelter. Mel's time away from BU during 2002-2007 included significant challenges that ultimately also helped develop and focus his life's goals. Indeed, these years turned out to be transformational for him. During that period, he hit a low point that put him in the situation of needing to seek food from a homeless shelter -the very same shelter where a few years earlier he had been a frequent volunteer. The shock of finding himself in this circumstance helped Mel realize that he had get back to the independent and self-sustaining life that he had before. He began this bootstrap process by earning money working at the shelter. Later he gained employment at an automobile dealership. Eventually, he even won a national award from the General Motors Company for his work at the dealership. But though Mel brought himself back to solvency and renewed independence, the work did not provide the satisfaction that he desired. Thus, in spring 2007 Mel returned to BU dedicated to completing his premedical requirements and his bachelor's degree.

During summer 2007, Mel nourished and confirmed his interest in becoming a physician by spending several weeks job-shadowing a physician at a general surgery practice. The physician who sponsored him there writes:

“Mel seems to have a real interest in medicine, particularly general surgery. He seems to have good motivation and was willing to spend long hours seeing patients with me and accompanying me to the Operating Room. He is a quiet, unassuming young man who is always very polite with other physicians and the patients.”

Mel has very good people skills, as evident in comments above from his recommenders and in the kinds of work and volunteer opportunities he has pursued. As another example, during his early years at BU Mel was elected Speaker of the General Assembly for his residence hall.

In conclusion, it is clear to us that Mel has made a remarkable journey. His dreams and goals have been refined in the crucible of life experience. Upon returning to BU he has engaged in academics with a vigor and purpose that was not as evident in his early years, and his vision for the future is certain. Mel is mature, has a sincere

desire to help people, and is dedicated to becoming a physician. We therefore *recommend* him as an applicant to medical school.

Applicant: Woodrow Wilson (same writer)

This committee letter is in strong support of the application of Woodrow Wilson for admission to medical school.

Woodrow graduated from High School in June 2005. He entered BUniversity (BU) in the fall of that same year and plans to graduate with a Bachelor of Science degree with majors in both biology and chemistry (biochemistry emphasis) in May 2009.

Woodrow was a one of five first-year students to receive a prestigious Regents' Scholarship upon admittance to BU. This award is given in recognition of and promise for outstanding academic achievement, leadership and service, and provides four years of full tuition. Woodrow has not disappointed us. Since that time, Woodrow has won several awards and honors, including being named to the ??? Society, an esteemed honor society founded in 1969 on the principles of Phi Beta Kappa. In addition, he was recognized as the Analytical Chemistry Student of the Year during his sophomore year. He is an extremely bright student who has impressed faculty members with both his academic abilities, high level of motivation and his leadership skills. A biology professor who taught Woodrow in three courses wrote:

“Woodrow was one of my students again in spring 2008, when he took *Developmental Biology* from me. Yet one more time he was at the top of the class. The upper division Developmental Biology course is very different from the courses Woodrow had taken earlier from me. This time he had to grapple with challenging concepts and apply them in problem solving situations. He had to read (and understand) papers from the current primary literature. Once again Woodrow proved equal to every challenge. His exams were always among the best in the class, with answers that were thoughtful, well constructed, and to the point. Overall he was the top student in the class.

Woodrow is one of the very best students I have known in 33 years at BU. He is bright; he has a real desire to learn, to understand, and to be able to apply what he has learned. That desire is matched by ability.”

Another biology professor wrote:

“Woodrow has taken two courses from me - *Mammalian Physiology and Neurobiology*. Woodrow is an extremely gifted and hard-working individual. He was an extreme pleasure to have in class. He was always very attentive in class and asked advanced questions demonstrating that he had a firm grasp of the material. He was an excellent student earning the top grades (A's) in both courses and had no problems whatsoever on exams or assignments. I have no doubt that he will perform well in medical school.”

Woodrow is a fine young man. Despite his outstanding intellectual abilities, he does not project a speck of arrogance. He is reliable, honest, caring and mature beyond his years. He is always willing to help the other students and works extremely well with all of his peers. Woodrow has worked as a general chemistry discussion group leader, facilitating hour-long group sessions with a primary focus on study skills and strategies. He currently serves as a student peer tutor of biology and chemistry in the Academic Assistance Center for two years. During his junior year, Woodrow served as the biology supplemental instruction leader, designing and facilitating review sessions for first-year biology students.

One of the course instructors wrote:

“The previous spring, I (along with several other members of the Biology Department) recommended to the director of Academic Assistance that Woodrow be selected from a small pool of excellent applicants as Supplemental Instruction leader for Biology 161. Supplemental Instruction is an approach to academic assistance in which a peer serves as major learning resource for students in a particular class. In his capacity as SI leader, Woodrow attended every lecture and held three one-hour study sessions every week. These study sessions typically featured small group problem solving activities, written exercises

of various sorts, practice exams (as well as tips regarding how to prepare for and take exams). Woodrow was totally responsible for designing the materials he used, though he met with me regularly for any suggestions I might have. Woodrow was an outstanding SI leader who was truly committed to serving the students taking Biology 161. When we administered a comprehensive exit survey at the end of the semester the students who had participated in SI offered glowing praise for Woodrow as a person and as an SI leader.”

Although he is a very serious student, he also enjoys spending time with his family and friends. He enjoys running and gardening. Woodrow considers himself to be a small-time movie buff and is very fond of comedy, hoping someday to present his own stand-up routine. In high school, he was a three-year varsity letterman in football and track and field, serving as captain his senior year in both sports. He was also editor-in-chief of his school newspaper. In college, he has been a member of the track and field team, wrote for the school newspaper, and served for the associated student body as a delegate for student-athlete affairs. For the past two summers, Woodrow has had the opportunity to work with chemistry professors as part of the BU Undergraduate Research Program. His research projects have examined the synthesis of &&& and the molecular characterization of +++. In January 2008, Woodrow had the opportunity to study abroad. We have attached the entire letter from the instructor of the course.

Woodrow has carefully considered his professional aspirations. For an entire month during this past summer, he had the opportunity to observe a pediatrician in his private practice approximately 32 hours/week. This experience culminated in attending the Pediatric Society Conference. The physician wrote:

" I am extremely confident of his academic achievement. He readily demonstrated the ability to extrapolate his knowledge and apply concepts to clinical decision-making. His undergraduate professors would be proud of this practical application of technical knowledge. I witnessed demonstrable empathy as well as professionalism in his interactions with my patients. He is gentle and compassionate in conduct and thus readily established rapport with my patients. Some of my patients have asked: ‘Where is Woodrow?’ and ‘Is he coming back?’ To those I reply: ‘I *truly* hope so.’ On his behalf, I give my highest endorsement. He will become a respected physician.”

In conclusion, a profession in medicine would combine two essential elements of Woodrow's life: continuing intellectual challenge and the satisfaction of community service. The Committee believes that Woodrow will become an excellent and caring physician. He therefore receives our *highest recommendation*.

EXAMPLES IN DIFFERENT DOMAINS

Initial Interest

Realizing that prevention was the key to slowing or stopping the spread of HIV, he began working at the @@@ Clinic (2/2006-present). At the @@@ Clinic, he continued to provide counseling for HIV-positive individuals but also took on a role of HIV prevention counseling. He has felt very rewarded by his efforts at the @@@ Clinic. However, he began to realize that there was more that he could do, if he were a physician. This realization gave him a new career goal and started him on the road to medical school.

Personality

For instance, while many students seem desperate to graduate and move on with their lives, David speaks with enthusiasm about how much more there is to learn, and he speaks with admiration about the students, faculty, and staff members he has met in the science- and medical-oriented forums in which he engaged. Recognizing that the opportunities he has have been available in great part because he has been at a university and in a community that believes in and inspires the human potential, David's comments continually reflect humility and gratitude for

his ability to participate in such forums and work with such individuals. Yet throughout, David has remained cognizant and respectful of his background and the place his family, friends, and community have had in his success.

Service

Chronicling her volunteer and employment history emphasizes her character. Her importance to the Q Athletic Department has already been covered. In her hometown, she has worked as a restaurant server and for a tree farm/landscaping business. She is definitely not afraid of dirty, messy, sweaty, unglamorous work. For two summers, Marcia was a staff member of \$\$\$ Learning Camps, part of %%% Summer School Recreation Program. The "camps" provided learning experiences for several different grade levels of kids (many of whom are Native American). She also has served as a substitute teacher in %%% Schools during the month of May (after Q is out and before public schools are out), and during longer breaks from college. After these summer programs were over, Marcia served as an administrative assistant.

Clinical Exposure

I have had the privilege of working with Eugenia since the summer of 2005. Since she first began volunteering with the ## Medical Clinic, I have seen her care for our clients with compassion, with patience and with professionalism. Eugenia has a sincere passion to help meet the needs of the people in our community who have traditionally been overlooked and underserved. I have been impressed with her dedication and focus in working with this vulnerable population. Eugenia has regularly assisted our nurses with triage and has helped address the health concerns of the men and women seeking help from our medical professionals. On many occasions, I have observed Eugenia assisting people who were suffering from physical and mental ailments that left them agitated and upset. She was able to offer them focused, compassionate care that made it possible for physicians to have productive, beneficial, treatment time with these patients.

Leadership

His commitment to improving the lives of youth through education and his willingness to engage himself in community enrichment cannot be ignored. You see a thoughtful planner, a skilled tactician, a disciplined administrator, and a proud role model.

Team player

During his time on Leadership Team, Joe has consistently shown he is not only a capable Department Coordinator but also that his work can remain unaffected by outside matters. Over the past few months I've been amazed to see how well Joe has worked with the interns assigned to him as well as how well he is able to complete his tasks while still making it through his courses, studying for his MCAT and being an excellent role model to his family. He has always been willing to put in extra time and effort to help others with their tasks and has been readily involved in special projects and events without question or hesitation. He has always been concerned with the upkeep of his department and has dedicated a lot of his time to helping our new interns become accustomed to their role as an integral part of the patient care team. Joe has always kept in mind that the most effective way to be a good leader is to lead by example and to remind others that this is a learning process for him too, so the work and effort put forth as a team is very important. With this mindset, he has been able to inspire others within the same branch to do a little more than their basic duties. Even with his significant

contributions, Joe has maintained his modesty and has always ensured that credit goes to others as well. Without a doubt, Joe's work on Leadership Team has strengthened the leadership of our program, as well as helped enrich the learning experience we try to provide for our interns.

Research

Dr. RR, Ph.D., Francis's research supervisor; says that "more than most students, Francis enjoys intellectual challenges and has the knowledge and resources to solve them." Dr. R says that Francis is "perceptive and very patient--characteristics that are essential for successful scientific research. In fact," he says, "it has been a privilege to work with him on his research project and I will sorely miss his presence in my lab."

Francis's original research with Dr. R has shown that *** is finally controlled in the cells with which he worked. He showed that *** acts as ... so that the immune system function is not impaired. Francis presented his work at several undergraduate research symposia and he and Dr. R plan to submit a journal article early this year. Dr. R found Francis' s research to be well-prepared, enthusiastic, and precise. He says that Francis is perceptive and patient, which are essential for success in scientific research. Francis worked with Dr. R for three years developing his own protocols, his own conclusions and his own techniques. I've witnessed how many hours he has spent at the lab, probably many more than he has spent playing the viola! Yet he performs both with grace, humbleness and distinction. Francis' s research earned him an award given to a graduating student. His presentation was delightful, understandable, and instructive. An undergraduate institution has only a few "Francises" that come along every few years and we have just been lucky enough to have him these last four years.

Academics

Mark Doe ranks as an excellent candidate for the study and practice of medicine. He is distinguished by his intellectual curiosity and broad interest in health and wellness. Mark graduated from R University earlier this year having completed both a concentration in English and a rigorous group of science courses in fulfillment of his premedical requirements. Mark's concentration choice comes as no surprise: He loves literature and believes that it will help him to better understand patients from diverse backgrounds when he becomes a doctor. Along with his good work in the humanities, Mark challenged himself in the sciences, taking more than the minimum courses required for medical school admission. These included upper level topics such as Techniques in Pathobiology, co-taught by Associate Professor PM. He notes Mark's strong performance in this course, which included completion of a research grant proposal. "Mark's grant proposal, which incorporates several of the technologies taught in our course, was outstanding and could serve as the basis for an actual NIH RO1 submission," writes Professor M. "He excels in both written and oral forms of communication as was demonstrated by his class participation and performance on written laboratory exercises, his midterm and final exams, and his research proposal."

Outside interests Although he is a very serious student, he also enjoys spending time with his family and friends. He enjoys running and gardening. Steve considers himself to be a small-time movie buff and is very fond of comedy, hoping someday to present his own stand-up routine. In high school, he was a three-year varsity letterman in football and track and field, serving as captain his senior year in both sports. He was also editor-in-chief of his school newspaper. In

college, he has been a member of the track and field team, wrote for the school newspaper, and served for the associated student body as a delegate for student-athlete affairs.