

October 24, 2005

Dear Truman Scholarship Committee,

This letter is written in strong support of the application of Jennifer Samimi to your scholarship program. I have known Jennifer for a couple of years now, initially as a student in my classes. She has been involved in a number of leadership programs on our campus including; Chancellor's Scholars and Leaders, Indigenous Support Network, the campus branch of Amnesty International, the American Friends Service Committee, and the campus branch of Jobs with Justice. I have served in the past on the Truman Scholarship committee, and we have had students selected for this honor. I believe that Jennifer clearly exemplifies the qualities you seek in a Truman scholar.

Jennifer is in the top 5% of students that I have had the pleasure of working with, in my twenty years as a university professor. One of her most outstanding qualities is the skill she has developed as a leader in community organizing. Jennifer recently conducted research to examine current purchasing policies regarding sweatshop made goods on our campus. She has been involved as a youth counselor on HIV issues for a number of years. In her position as a counselor at Children's Hospital she developed a number of life skills workshops for them including medication adherence improvement, and job search strategies. She currently works as a fundraising intern for the Grassroots Institute. Her knowledge of community organizing and social justice issues is astounding in its scope and depth. I can promise that Jennifer will meet, and exceed, all expectations of your award. She is extremely bright, responsible, and visionary.

Jennifer has already won a number of award and scholarships at this early stage in her career, including; an Urban Peak Award, the youth leadership award from the Rocky Mountain Forum on Community and Restorative Justice, the White Rose scholarship, and Chancellor's Scholars and Leaders scholarship.

Jennifer is a minor in our department. I have had a chance to review Jennifer's written work, including lengthy research papers. Her written work is lively, well written, and sophisticated in its analysis. Her research is impeccable, and both ambitious and illuminating.

One arena in which Jennifer can make a unique contribution is in her understanding of the relationship between community organizing and mainstream government entities. She is knowledgeable of historic and current legal trends that have ushered in a new era of community self-determination. Jennifer is astute in evaluating the steps that have been made toward political self-determination in communities over the past century. Her verbal articulation of these ideas is persuasive and fascinating. I believe she would have no trouble in distilling complicated political abstractions.

Jennifer is extremely capable, both as an individual, and on a collective level. Jennifer never misses a deadline. I have heard her lecture to groups on a number of occasions, and found her multimedia presentations to be extremely professional. She is an excellent public speaker.

Jennifer is a leader in the Denver community, who will make a difference in your program. Her communication and people skills are among the strongest I have ever encountered. She will serve as a visible model of success to many communities. Her sophisticated scholarly view is an extraordinary and important one. Please do not hesitate to contact me, if I can provide further information. It is difficult to imagine a better candidate for your scholarship program.

Sincerely,

Donna Langston, Ph.D.
Chair and Professor of Ethnic Studies
University of Colorado at Denver