

February 24, 20xx

Dear Sir or Madam:

Student Y is applying to your medical degree program and I am happy to provide a letter in support of her application. I have known Y since the start of this semester as her organic chemistry instructor. Y is an extremely hard-working student. She has performed at the class average on all tests and homework assignments thus far. She is attentive in class and quick to notice mistakes that I make. She is not afraid to ask questions and when she does, they are usually thought provoking in nature. Y is quite strong intellectually, and it is for this reason that I was surprised that she was not doing better in the class. It was after speaking with her privately over a month ago, and several times since that I discovered why this may be so. It turns out that Y essentially works nearly full time as a phlebotomist and part time as a teaching assistant in general chemistry in order to support herself and pay for her tuition. With the number of hours that she puts in at work, it is amazing that she is even keeping up with the material, let alone performing at the class average.

I was on the scholarship committee 2 years ago that interviewed Y. Of the many students that I have interviewed, Y is the student whose interview I recall most vividly. This is because she mentioned her participation on her high school lacrosse team. This was the *men's* lacrosse team! From that point on, I knew that this was a very special person; one who is accustomed to tackling adversity and proving people wrong. In speaking with her during office hours, I have learned that she has had many such challenges in life, and each one furthers my respect for this ambitious young woman.

Y's work ethic is second to no student that I have encountered in my x years of teaching. She is bright, charismatic, and very easy to get along with. She is also a leader. As a teaching assistant in general chemistry, Y helps the instructor to oversee 16 students. Her leadership and sense of responsibility for her charges was exemplified one day when she came to me with a concern. This very touchy issue involved the instructor that she was TAing for. It turns out that this instructor was engaging in activities that were unsafe for the students. Y trusted me with this information, even though the repercussions would be dire if this instructor were to discover that Y was informing me of these events. The courage that Y displayed, yet again, cemented in my mind the fact that this is an upstanding individual, one who can accomplish anything she sets out to do. You will undoubtedly receive applications from students with better grades than Y, but I believe you will be hard-pressed to find any individual who has the combination of life-experience and perseverance that Y possesses. I recommend her without reservation.

Sincerely,

Thomas Poon  
Associate Professor of Chemistry