Everything a New Faculty Member Needs to Know about Becoming an Effective Advisor and Mentor

Loretta McGregor, Arkansas State University
Ana Bridges, University of Arkansas
Wednesday, January 23, 2019

College of Nursing and Health Professions Program Director
Occupational Therapy Doctorate Program

Dear Program Admissions Committee:

It is with great pleasure that I write this letter of recommendation on behalf of Ms. (student name)’s application to your doctoral program in Occupational Therapy. I have known (student name) for approximately five years. She recently graduated from our Bachelors of Psychology degree program with an overall GPA of 3.892 on a 4.00 scale.

My evaluation of (student name)’s ability to succeed in your program is based on her academic performance, the goodness of fit of your program, and my personal interactions with her. Thus, I rank (student name)’s academic abilities, at the undergraduate level, in the top 2% of all students I have encountered at Arkansas State University. I also rank her ability to perform in your graduate program in the top 5% of all graduate students I have encountered in my 25+ years of teaching in higher education. Several students from the Department of Psychology and Counseling have been accepted and are currently enrolled in your OTD program. I rank (student name)’s ability to complete your degree program among the top ranked psychology students you have accepted, thus far. I can honestly say I wish I had more students like (student name).

I first met (student name) when she enrolled in a section of PSY 1013: Making Connections: Psychological Wellness, which I taught. Since then, I have had the pleasure of instructing her in two additional courses. Although (student name) has a very strong transcript and vita, her documentation alone cannot fully illustrate her motivation, passion, and her desire to obtain a degree in Occupational Therapy. I believe her personal statement adequately depicts her passion for the field when she writes about her encounter with an Occupation Therapist, while working with her first client.

(Student name) began her academic journey as a pre-med major. However, she decided that pre-med was not for her and switched her major to psychology. She was well suited for psychology because of her love for research and desire to help others. (Student name) has a strong background in research. She participated in various research labs located in the biological sciences. Furthermore, she is a co-author on four research publications and presentations. Her psychology degree has helped her hone and refine her research skills in the context of human behavior. (Student name) has now decided to combine her desire to help others with her love for research through the pursuit of a doctoral degree in Occupational Therapy. She will find that affinity for research, interest in human behavior, and passion for others will be of great use in your program. Based on my conversations with her, I believe Arkansas State University is the best place for her to accomplish her goal of becoming an Occupational Therapist.

(Student name) is a hard worker. As an undergraduate student, her course work always showed a true comprehension of the material and it was obvious that a great deal of time and effort went into the preparation. She often exceeded the minimum requirements set for an assignment. I am pleased to say that these traits have grown stronger over the years. I have always and continue to
be impressed with (student name)’s work ethic and dedication to attaining her educational goal. This is why I am convinced she will succeed in your program.

On a personal note, (student name) is compassionate and giving toward others. She is routinely upbeat and a genuine joy to be around. I believe she is a natural fit for the discipline and your degree program.

With that said, (student name) is a great example of the type of student who would succeed in your program. I have no doubt she is capable of completing a doctoral degree in Occupational Therapy. That is why I enthusiastically and without reservation recommend her for your program.

I hope I have provided you with information that will aid you in the selection process. Please feel free to contact me if you have additional questions.

Sincerely,

Loretta Neal McGregor, Ph.D.
Professor of Psychology
Faculty Association/Senate Chair
Department of Psychology and Counseling
College of Education and Behavioral Science
P.O. Box 1560 | State University, AR 72467
Phone: (870) 972-3064 | Fax: (870) 972-3962
Lmcgregor@astate.edu
Dear Dr. XXXXX:

I am writing to recommend Mr. XXXXXXXX for your graduate program in Counselor Education at Auburn University. I have known XXXXX for approximately five years. He is a graduate of our Specialist in Education in Psychology and Counseling program with a specialty in mental health counseling, at Arkansas State University. He also served as a graduate teaching assistant for the Department of Psychology and Counseling where he taught multiple sections of introduction to psychology and a statistics lab. I supervise all of the graduate teaching assistants; therefore, I served as XXXXX’s immediate supervisor.

XXXXXX is an exceptional student. He is exceptional in the sense that his undergraduate major was in a discipline other than psychology. He chose business and finance as his major and minored in psychology. After obtaining his baccalaureate degree, he worked in banking for a number of years. However, even as he became successful in the area of banking, his longing to make a difference through counseling stayed with him. He entered the Specialist in Education in Psychology and Counseling graduate program in May 2009 and declared an emphasis in mental health counseling. Not only did XXXXX flourish in our program, he excelled and became one of our top students graduating with a 4.0 GPA.

Although I did not have the pleasure of teaching XXXXX in a formal course, I did spend many hours with him discussing various topics related to psychology. I found him to be insightful and his knowledge and passion for the discipline clearly shown through these conversations. As a result of our many discussions, when XXXXX approached me about his desire to become a graduate teaching assistant, I enthusiastically invited him to apply for the position. Each year, we hire three graduate students to teach multiple sections of the introduction to psychology course or a statistics lab. We routinely have numerous applications for these three positions. XXXXX held this position for three consecutive semesters, teaching multiple sections of introduction to psychology AND statistics labs.

As I mentioned above, I supervise all of the graduate teaching assistants. I routinely meet with them to process their experiences and I observe them in the classroom. The teaching assistants are also evaluated by the students enrolled in their respective course(s). The
student teaching evaluations regarding XXXXXX’s performance were extremely positive as well as my observations of his performance. Our weekly meetings left no doubt in my mind that XXXXXX would be a great addition to the academy. I enjoyed having him as a teaching assistant.

XXXXXX is a shining example of the type of student who would excel in your program. He is intelligent, well-rounded, personable, and a hard worker. He has a true passion for the discipline and a clear sense of direction in regards to his career plans. XXXXXX wants to complete his graduate training in counselor education and has explored the possibility of entering the professoriate, as well as being in private practice. I have no doubt that he will accomplish both goals and I enthusiastically recommend him for your program.

Please feel free to contact me, if you have any additional questions.

Sincerely,

Loretta Neal McGregor, Ph.D., Chair
Department of Psychology and Counseling
Arkansas State University, Jonesboro
P.O. Box 1560
State University, AR 72467
870-972-3064 (Phone)
Lmcgregor@astate.edu
To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing to recommend XXXXXXX for your graduate program in Neurobiology and Developmental Science. I have known XXXXXXX for three years. I first met him when he enrolled in a course that I taught during my tenure at XXXXXXX University. He was a student in several other courses that I taught and he performed well in each of these classes.

XXXXXX wrote excellent essays in my classes that readily demonstrate his clarity of thought. He gave oral presentations in class that showed a true comprehension of the material. **XXXXXX is one of the brightest students that I have ever encountered.** He has a natural curiosity and can easily absorb and utilize new information. **Unfortunately, XXXXXXX lacked the drive to achieve his full potential while in college.** I do hope that he is now capable of greater self-motivation.

I have no doubt that XXXXXXX has the ability to complete a graduate degree. That is why I am recommending him for your graduate program in Neurobiology and Developmental Science. I hope that I have provided you with information that will aid you in the selection process. Please feel free to contact me if you have any additional questions.

Respectfully,

Loretta Neal McGregor, Ph.D., Chair
Department of Psychology and Counseling
Arkansas State University
State University, AR 72467
Lmcgregor@astate.edu
Dear Selection Committee:

I have been asked to write a letter in support of XXXXXXXX application to the Masters of Science in School Psychology at the University of XXXXX.

I have known XXXXX for approximately four years. She is currently a senior psychology major at Arkansas State University and I have served as her academic adviser since her arrival on campus. XXXXX is a very kind-hearted and caring person. She has a strong desire to help individuals who have special needs. She is not only sympathetic toward others but also has a deep sense of empathy. I believe she has a lot of potential to be an effective service provider in the right environment. Therefore, I encourage you to give careful consideration to her application.

I hope I have provided you with information that will aid you in the selection process. Please feel free to contact me if you have additional questions.
Student Researcher Application for MAC lab

Name: ____________________ Student ID: ______________ Date: __________

Address: ___________________ City: ______________ State: __________ Zip: ______

County: _____________________

Phone: ______________ Email: ___________________ Date of Birth: ______________

Home Department: ______________ Degree Program: ______________ GPA: ______

Psychology Courses Completed

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course ID/Name</th>
<th>Term Taken</th>
<th>Grade Received</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Psy 2013: Introduction to Psychology</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Psy 2023: Psychology as a Science and Profession</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Psy 3103: Quantitative Methods/Lab</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

English Proficiency:

If English is not your first language, please provide your Toefl score: Score_____ (if applicable)

Please answer all of the following questions:

Are you currently a member of another research lab? Yes____ No ______

If yes, name of lab: ________________________________________________

Have you been a member of a lab in the past? Yes____ No ______

If yes, name of lab: ________________________________________________
References:
Please provide the names of two faculty references. One must be from the Department of Psychology and Counseling

Name:__________________________________________ Dept.________________________ Email________________________

Name:__________________________________________ Dept.________________________ Email________________________

Please attach a copy of your schedule. Be sure to also include all commitments outside of classes also.

I, ________________________________ declare that the information provided above is true and accurate.

Signature:______________________________ Date:________________________
Research Lab Assistant Guidelines

Contact:
Faculty Advisor:

Summary:
The purpose of this research lab is to….

Potential Responsibilities:
• Assist in developing and testing experimental study procedures
• Set up and run participants through experiments
• Data entry/management
• Literature reviews

Requirements:
• Minimum GPA of 2.75
• Available to work 10 hrs/week
• Minimum 1 year (e.g., 2 semesters) commitment
• Responsible, reliable, organized, and punctual
• Attentive to details
• Ability to work independently and be self-motivated

Not required but preferred:
• Intention to pursue graduate education in psychology or related field
• Prior research experience
• Currently a junior, sophomore, or freshman

Compensation:
• Positions are available for course/research credit or on a volunteer basis
• Potential opportunities to co-author peer-reviewed manuscripts/conference presentations
• Learn experimental procedures as well as a number of experimental tasks
• Gain experience working with participants in a research setting
• Gain transferable skills
• Learn about the field of…
• Opportunity to receive mentoring

To Apply:
Please email a brief statement of interest, a current CV/resume, your preferred start date, and your availability to