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January 29, 2021

To whom it may concern:

Shawn Donoghue has asked me to write a letter of recommendation in support of her application for a position in your school district and it is my absolute pleasure and honor to do so. I have known Shawn since August, 2019; she has taken three courses I have taught and I have provided informal advising and mentorship to her as well. During this time, I have come to know Shawn very well and can speak to the broad range of skills and abilities she can bring to your school.

Allow me to begin by giving Shawn my highest recommendation. In over 20 years in the field (as a school counselor and faculty member at three different institutions), I have not met many students like her. Shawn is smart, thoughtful, insightful, and creative. She not only works exceptionally hard but takes on additional responsibility without being asked. This is a great trait, but what makes it remarkable to me is because Shawn takes on these extra tasks because *she wants to*. It's purely intrinsic motivation. She will do so quietly and without expectation of attention. She does it because she wants to grow, to learn, and to be a better student, counselor, and person. She does it because she genuinely wants to make a difference with her students and in the world.

Shawn earned As in all three courses (Crisis and Trauma Counseling, Diagnosis and Treatment Planning, and Secondary Counseling Internship), but that doesn't surprise me. She's an excellent student. She showed curiosity, creativity, and leadership in my courses, skills that are essential to the practicing school counselor. But more importantly, Shawn doesn't just watch words go by on a PowerPoint slide and passively write down what is being said. She asks thoughtful, engaging questions that show she cares about the material in the class and about learning how to apply it to her work as a professional school counselor.

In internship, I was able to get a good sense for Shawn's work in the field. She is willing and ready to go above and beyond and demonstrated independence, dedication, trustworthiness, and emerging skill as a new counselor. Completing a school counseling internship during COVID-19 *is not easy*. She was challenged to find new and inventive ways to gain experience. She sought out every opportunity she could and she committed herself to her site and to the students with whom she was working. She showed the ability to accept feedback through supervision and to be self-reflective in her areas of strength and for growth. While she was only at her site for a few months (through school closures thanks to a global pandemic), she was still able to help students grow, and hopefully succeed.

Shawn is also the recipient of a stipend through a federally funded (HRSA) grant that West Chester was able to secure. In this highly selective program, students apply for a stipend that helps to fund their last year of academic courses while working in high risk, high need school

districts. Grant recipients are required to take additional coursework and attend additional trainings that focus on issues such as addiction, food and housing insecurity, and so forth. Shawn's selection for this program was a result of her being an outstanding status; her success since entering the program is a result of her hard work and genuine dedication for the field and for working with underserved communities.

Shawn is an outstanding student, an outstanding developing counselor, and most importantly, a genuine, kind-hearted person that I am privileged for having known. Having hired many counselors during my career, I understand the task ahead of you; you have too many qualified candidates and you're searching for the data that suggest one stands out above the rest. I'm also a school board member so I understand the importance of hiring staff that can be trusted and will represent the district well. I can give no greater recommendation than this; I have two children and if I were hiring their school counselor, I would not hesitate in hiring Shawn Donoghue. Once I did, I'd ask my kids to go meet Ms. Donoghue as soon as they could.

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact me at ewens@wcupa.edu. Thank you for your attention.

Most sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "E. W. Owens", with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

Eric W. Owens, PhD, LPC, NCC, ACS
Chairperson and Professor
Department of Counselor Education, West Chester University