

Dear Committee,

It is with great honor that I write this letter of recommendation for [Student]. I have twice served on the William N. Wasson Student Leadership & Academic Awards Committee. Without bias, I have come across few students or student applications more deserving of this award than [Student]. This student offers a unique combination of excellence in their academic pursuits, professional development outside of recreation, leadership within the campus recreation unit, and staunch commitment to equity, diversity, and inclusion on their campus.

[Student] has achieved academic excellence at a prestigious research institution as a Materials Science and Engineering major. They have maintained a 3.72 GPA into their final year of college while holding multiple undergraduate researcher positions to complement their classroom learning. Their experience includes studying abroad, obtaining eight laboratory equipment certifications, four different programming analysis trainings, and acquiring Portuguese as a second language. They have also conducted research and submitted grants with two university professors. In addition, they have already been accepted into a master's program and has begun earning graduate-level credits while still in their senior year of undergraduate coursework. If this is not impressive enough, they have accomplished all of this while maintaining an outstanding professional development portfolio to complement their academics.

In reviewing [Student]'s resume, you will find an outstanding commitment to excellence outside of academics. [Student] has gained two different internship experiences as a Summer Polymer Chemistry Research Intern and a Senior Lab Intern. In addition, they currently hold two research positions as a Lead Undergraduate Research Assistant and Materials Science Specialist. These accomplishments highlight their dedication to contributing to their professional field in conjunction with his academic pursuits. Their professional contributions to Materials Science and Engineering include initiating, forming, and supervising a new research project at the University, researching environmentally friendly concrete applications, and creating a more eco-friendly Nylon-6,6 plastic. They have found all of this success academically and professionally while serving their campus as a leader within Campus Recreation Services.

My favorite successes to highlight for [Student] are the ones they have found in Campus Recreation Services at the University. As a Membership Services Associate, [Student] immediately impacted our unit through their work as a frontline guest service representative. Their work with conflict resolution, problem-solving, and creating a welcoming environment earned them a promotion to a Membership Services Supervisor. In this role, they quickly established themselves as a leader by training new staff, overseeing key projects, and helping implement our Fusion software addition. When [Student] was ready to take the next step, they applied for our department's highest-level student leadership position.

[Student] immediately found success upon earning a position as a Facility Manager. During their first year, [Student] led a life-saving response for a guest suffering from a heart attack, helped lead our transition to a new recruiting, hiring, and onboarding process, and managed our recreation center's highest traffic year to date. In year two, [Student] helped us re-open during COVID-19, including training seven new facility managers and helping to reset the facility during our modified operations. In the spring semester of 2021, they led a student-employee petition that fostered a comprehensive overhaul of our onboarding, ongoing training, and incident response efforts for employee misconduct. These achievements earned them the Crimson Honor Award, distinguishing them as the highest-level honoree among our 200+ student employees. Perhaps [Student]'s most remarkable contributions to our department and our campus are improving equity, diversity, and inclusion.

Few college students, let alone higher education professionals, can impact a campus's culture in the way [Student] has. In our department, [Student] has advocated for underrepresented students as the critical liaison between the student and professional staff. Their work to report issues, provide solutions, and lead difficult conversations has initiated a change that would not have happened otherwise. I have highlighted one such change above. Another example is [Student]'s willingness to disclose their sexuality as an openly gay male leading in a hypermasculine space. Their vulnerability and bravery have inspired others to share their concerns and ideas for how Campus Recreation Services can improve our organizational culture. You will see [Student] impacting campus equity and diversity outside of recreation through their other student leadership roles. Examples include their role as an Alternative Breaks Leader, Student Leader for the Bags to Beds program, and work with the Ronald McDonald House Charity. They also formerly served as a Senior Peer Advisor for the LEAP program.

In eight years supervising college students, I have come across few as impressive as [Student]. Their ability to achieve academically while developing as a professional distinguishes them from their peers. I have yet to work with an undergraduate student who possesses the desire and ability to impact equity, diversity, and inclusion on their campus like they have. If they were honored with the William N. Wasson Student Leadership & Academic Award, they would pay forward this designation throughout their time as a student and beyond.

Name

Position

Department

Institution

Office Phone Number

Email