



DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY

SANTA BARBARA, CALIFORNIA 93106-9430
(805) 893-3118 FAX (805) 893-3324

December 9, 2012

Re: Matt Zajic

Dear Madam/Sir:

It is my pleasure to write in support of Matt Zajic as he applies for your program in writing development. I have known Matt for more than three years in several capacities. During this time he has taken five courses from me (Soc 142, 185P, 152A, 152B and 152C), earning "A" and "A+" grades in all five. He has earned a 3.72 overall GPA and a 3.86 in his major (with a 3.96 in his major's upper division courses). He has been on the Dean's Honors List seven times.

I first came to know Matt when he did such an outstanding job in my large lecture class (Soc 152A) that I invited him to be in the honors course (Soc 152B) that I hold the next quarter for the very best students in the prior quarter. It was in the honors class that I first came to know Matt well and to respect his broad range of intelligence and numerous academic interests. Soc 152B is a small discussion class and Matt was one of the most amazing contributors, making thoughtful comments on the ideas that other students floated around the classroom and on the textbook. Matt was always thoughtful of the other students and worded his contributions in ways that expanded on the ideas presented by others.

After that quarter, I asked Matt to be one of the webmasters for Soc 152C, which is a small class that writes material for the UCSB-hosted website called SexInfo. Matt has written many articles and Q&As for the website and contributed many creative ideas to the class discussions. But it soon became clear that he wanted to join the webmasters who take care of all the technical computer work needed to make a website function. He has a passion for computers and has grown enormously in his computer skills over the past two years. Our website is migrating to a new Drupal platform—which is requiring many hours of advanced programming—and Matt has been central to the success of that important project. He has mastered HTML, CSS and the new Drupal content management system. He has also served as an editor for the written work of other students in the class, since he has become very proficient in his courses on writing and editing.

Matt has done research in the Department of Psychology, under Dr. Matthew Quirk, organizing and analyzing data using SPSS. He has become very involved with the Koegel Autism Program in the Department of Education, working with young people with Asperger Syndrome and starting to reorganize the Koegels' website. He has done

research for me, exploring the interface between social learning theory and sexuality, using PsychINFO, ERIC, Academic Search Complete and other academic search engines.

Matt has worked for various organizations on campus, such as the writing program—where he has excelled in writing, editing, grammar classes and professional writing strategies. He has graded for my Soc 142 (Socialization) class during three different quarters, and graded for my Soc 176D (Drugs and Society) class once. He has always been the most proficient and professional of all the students who I have ever hired to grade for my courses. He has been working for CLAS (the Campus Learning Assisted Services) for a couple of years, doing some of his CLAS work for my courses; and I am happy to say that I have never had a CLAS employee do as amazing a job as Matt has. He is extremely creative in devising methods to help UCSB students learn a broad range of courses.

You will also see on Matt's resume that he has served as a tutor at five local Santa Barbara organizations that work to improve students' learning and grades. He has been tutoring since 2005 and has developed considerable skill at this type of work. He has told me about some of his experiences, and he gets truly excited by the innovations he has developed to be as effective as possible with many different kinds of students.

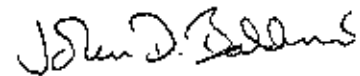
Matt is quite skillful in his use of spoken and written English, especially now that he has been working with the writing program for many quarters. He has a friendly style of interacting—which other people love—which helps make him so effective in teaching, tutoring, CLAS programs and therapy programs in the Koegel Clinic. He interacts well with many different types of people. He is also a very responsible worker with high standards of perfectionism. He is both a gentleman and a scholar.

For the past two years, Matt has been focusing increasing attention to the teaching of writing and grammar. He tutor and leads CLAS study sessions on writing and is currently employed by CLAS as their "Academic Communities of Excellence Writing Tutor." He has taught courses on preparing for the GRE. He was chosen to be the editor for the Institute for Collaborative Biotechnologies at UCSB, gathering 140 grant proposals and merging them into one seamless whole, with a consistent writing style—which was a daunting task lasting many months.

In 2012 I received a grant to convert my popular Soc 152A course to a PowerPoint presentation. This involved converting around three thousand 35mm transparencies (some being text and others images) to create a PowerPoint presentation for all 10 weeks of the course. Matt made sure that all the text slides were consistent in logic, clarity of presentation and format. He also scanned in all the images, using a variety of computer tools to enhance their appearance as much as possible. The entire quarter ran smoothly as Matt stayed ahead of my lectures and the entire new PowerPoint presentation brought my course to a higher level of clarity, accuracy and aesthetic beauty.

By now it should be abundantly clear that Matt is one of the best students in his graduating class. He stands out among his peers as an extremely serious and honest individual. He loves challenges and rises to them with very creative solutions that impress everyone who works with him. He is a cheerful, generous, mature and wise person who contributes enormously to making UCSB a great campus. Matt earns my very highest recommendation—bar none. He will be an outstanding professional, who will make many contributions to the lives of a broad range of other people both now and in the future. If I can be of any further help to you, please do not hesitate to phone me at (805) 967-4995.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "John D. Baldwin".

John D. Baldwin, Ph.D.
Professor
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