

Sample Letter from a Non-faculty Member*

Through my campus work with the American Red Cross, I have known John Lerner for approximately six months. He introduced himself to me as the co-founder of a new business, Sword of the Round Table (SRT). He spent a great deal of time with me when we first met, explaining the ways in which this group could be of service to the American Red Cross. Our first project together involved SRT's promotion of Red Cross Services in exchange for our promotion of a textbook delivery service, after which we expanded into numerous other areas. Though I was initially skeptical of the ways in which we could work together, John successfully helped me overcome my concerns, and worked hard to establish a relationship of trust and commitment.

Sword of the Round Table works to facilitate mutually beneficial relationships between businesses and not-for-profits. With the help of SRT, the American Red Cross has increased its exposure in the community, yielding greater participation in our programs. With John's help, the American Red Cross has been able to promote its services through the Mythic University Student Book Store, a highly visible business with a large student clientele.

John was instrumental in the following initiatives developed with the cooperation of the manager of the Student Book Store:

- (1) permanent window space to advertise Red Cross programs,
- (2) periodic Red Cross information tables outside the store,
- (3) blood schedules to be dispensed with customer purchases,
- (4) the establishment of the first "Business Partnership Award," designed to encourage other business/not-for-profit partnerships in our community.

Another example of John's creativity was the development of a poster-sized "Semester-at-a-Glance" calendar for Mythic University students to purchase. This calendar will promote Red Cross services, listing campus bloodmobiles, along with other important student-based events. Part of the proceeds from this calendar will directly benefit the American Red Cross.

John is a valuable student leader, delegating with authority and competence. In addition to his assistance as a co-founder of SRT, he has been of tremendous value to my program as a resident assistant. He voluntarily made presentations on the importance of donating blood to other resident assistants, as well as to the residence hall council of which he is a member. John's role as a persuasive and informative disseminator of information is a valuable one. It will certainly translate into the enrollment of new blood donors into our system. He has also shared information about donating blood to dozens of fraternities and sororities at Mythic University.

John is a tireless volunteer and leader, and has demonstrated great sensitivity to organizational needs, as well as creativity in solving problems. He is perceptive, emphatic, and committed to every task he takes on. In my six years of work with the American Red Cross, I have never encountered a more capable or hard-working student volunteer. John will be a committed and creative public servant, and I recommend him highly indeed.

** This letter was typed onto a form, recommending a student for a career in public service.*

General Internship Recommendation



February xx, 20xx

Ms. Stephanie Armstrong
American Meteorological Society
45 Beacon Street
Boston, Massachusetts 02108-3693

Dear Ms. Armstrong:

I am writing in enthusiastic support of Janet Lerner for an internship. I have known Janet since she was a student in my course in Synoptic and Dynamic Meteorology last fall. Janet distinguished herself in my course by receiving the highest grade in the class. But this accomplishment only scratches the surface of her ability and character. Janet is the type of person who loves learning. She's one of those rare people who works very hard and diligently, but does so with a smile on her face. She constantly strives for excellence in meteorology, but Janet does not let her thirst for knowledge rule her life. She is a scientific humanist, with a genuine caring for others. It should come as no surprise that Janet is well-liked and admired by her peers.

Janet's knowledge of the intricacies of how the atmosphere works was unrivaled in my course, allowing her to easily win a competitive class forecasting contest. Janet is also a leader, holding a position in the Campus Weather Service, a student-run organization that provides weather information to radio stations across five states.

I know first-hand that Janet performs with aplomb in challenging situations. I was in the Weather Station one day while Janet was conducting a tour for parents and their young daughters. The president of Mythic University happened to be in the group—an intimidating presence to most undergraduates—but Janet handled herself with a polished confidence, attending to audience questions about meteorology in a clear, friendly, unaffected manner.

In short, Janet's high caliber of character and keen meteorological expertise set her well above others at her level of education. I warmly recommend her for an internship.

Regards,
John Teacher
John Teacher
Instructor in Meteorology

Research Internship Recommendation



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MYTHIC
UNIVERSITY

123 Ivy Road, Mythic CA 99999 555-123-4567

February xx, 20xx

Ms. Melanie-Claire Mallison
NNUN REU Program Coordinator
Cornell Nanofabrication Facility
M102 Knight Laboratory
Cornell University, Ithaca, NY 14853-5403

Dear Ms. Mallison,

I am writing in support of Mr. John Lerner's application to participate in the NNUN Research Experiences for Undergraduates program this summer.

Mr. Lerner is a student in Materials Science and Engineering at Mythic University. He is pursuing a joint BS/MS degree in our Integrated Undergraduate/Graduate program in Materials Science and Engineering. He possesses a perfect 4.0 GPA, and has shown significant aptitude in performing research in my group. He is planning to use this research for his dissertation.

Among his accomplishments, last year Mr. Lerner was the sole recipient of our department's research fellowships for first-year students, and has selected a project in my group concerning the role of tin doping on the structure, surface chemistry, and nano-indentation behavior of soda lime silica glass. He began working alongside my graduate students in the fall term, and has been actively engaged in glass batching, melting, fining, and surface preparation for subsequent analyses. He is continuing this research this semester, focusing on examining the leaching and hydration behavior of the doped glasses. This work will lead to an examination of the role of tin on hydrated layer formation and alteration of the surface elastic properties as measured by nano-indentation techniques.

In addition to his academic and research performance, Mr. Lerner also interacts well with his colleagues. He is an articulate, polite, informed, and motivated young man. He participates well in my bi-weekly research group meetings, is always well prepared for our one-on-one meetings on his research progress, and has an excellent vision of where he would like to go, academically, over the next few years. I think he would be an excellent REU candidate, and I enthusiastically endorse his application.

Sincerely,
John Teacher
John Teacher
Professor and Chairman—Undergraduate Studies
Department of Materials Science and Engineering

Recommendation by a Graduate Student



February xx, 20xx

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing on behalf of Ms. Janet Lerner, an undergraduate with whom I have been acquainted for four years as her graduate student lab supervisor. A biochemistry major, Janet has dedicated much of her time outside of the classroom to research directed by our mentor Dr. John Teacher. Janet's efforts have been fruitful: she has contributed data to at least one manuscript and has delivered several successful poster presentations.

Over the years, I have had the pleasure of watching this young woman blossom into a focused, self-assured scholar who aspires to a career combining both clinical and basic research. Although Janet struggled to see her own potential earlier in her college career, encouragement from her advisor as well as her labmates, coupled with her own growing desire to succeed, transformed this once tentative student into an important contributor to the lab. Even as a senior graduate student, I have benefited from Janet's presence in the lab. She has excellent lab hands, and she is, in fact, responsible for teaching me some of the main staples of molecular biology, which have become essential to my work. Furthermore, Janet's mastery of quantitative RT-PCR, in particular, has made her an invaluable resource for undergraduate and graduate students alike. An undergraduate who has earned my implicit trust and respect, Janet would surely be an asset to any laboratory.

Janet's talents and motivations are not limited strictly to the lab, however. She is a young person who cares deeply about the social implications of science and who has demonstrated this conviction through several substantial internships. Working closely with a well-known local TV health correspondent, one of Janet's internships involved producing news stories that pertained to health-related topics. Another internship focused on health education locally. Her efforts culminated in an HIV/AIDS prevention program designed for teenagers at risk for infection in the local area. These few examples embody the depth of Janet's commitment to science, which for her begins at the bench top, but has important implications at the bedside.

Without hesitation, I recommend Ms. Janet Lerner unequivocally for the Research in Science and Engineering summer program.

Sincerely,

Janet Student

Janet Student, M.E.S., M.S.

Ph.D. Candidate in Toxicology

Graduate Assistant in Biochemistry

Recommendation for a Specific Non-research Position



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123 Ivy Road, Mythic CA 99999 555-123-4567

February xx, 20xx

Letter of Support for Janet Lerner to the Dinamation International Society

In my opinion, I have never before written a recommendation letter where the candidate and the opportunity were such a perfect fit. I have known Janet Lerner for two years now, since she took my introductory course in dinosaurs during her sophomore year. In my long teaching career, I have never met an undergraduate student with such a genuine and focused interest in paleontology, and such a clear aptitude for it. I will demonstrate this by speaking to Janet's ability as a communicator, her specific interest in dinosaur paleontology, and her maturity and integrity.

Janet informs me that you are seeking a skilled communicator to give tours of your animatronic displays. Even during her sophomore year, Janet was a skilled communicator on the subject of dinosaur paleontology. In my class, for which she received an A, Janet wrote two compositions: one on the roots of the discovery and the characteristics of *Deinonychus*; one evaluating the defensive capabilities of *Euoplocephalus*. Janet proved herself not only exceptionally articulate and schooled on the subject at hand, but she also showed herself capable of wielding an argument—moving from premise to conclusion based on relevant evidence. Janet also did all this with style and flair. I cite excerpts from her papers: “Previously seen as cold-blooded, pea-brained lizards . . .” and “The toe muscles acted as a spring mechanism to flick the claw around towards the back of the foot.” For me, such articulations underscore both Janet's authentic fascination with dinosaurs and her ability to communicate that excitement and knowledge to others.

As an academic advisor to the dormitory where Janet lives, I frequently witness her interactions with others and know first-hand of her community service. Last year, Janet was the elected vice-president in the dormitory, and in this role she was responsible for numerous functions, including faculty/student lunches and a recruiting phoneathon. Janet is well-respected in the dormitory—a popular figure known for her honesty, calm, and kindness. I have seen her handle delicate situations with discretion, and she handles herself in all situations with poise.

Finally, Janet has strong convictions tempered by good judgment and reason; she has firm spiritual roots and an active, diverse, social life; she is loyal, committed, and clear-sighted. It is a rare treat to encounter a student as impressive as Janet Lerner, and if you give her the opportunity I am sure you will find her equally impressive. Please do give her your most thoughtful consideration.

Sincerely,
Janet Teacher
Janet Teacher
Professor of Geosciences