

**29<sup>th</sup> Institute on Teaching and Mentoring**

**The Atlanta Marriot Marquis**

**Atlanta, GA**

**October 27<sup>th</sup>-30<sup>th</sup>, 2022**

**EVERYTHING A NEW FACULTY  
MEMBER NEEDS TO KNOW  
ABOUT BECOMING AN EFFECTIVE  
ADVISOR AND MENTOR**

DR. LORETTA NEAL MCGREGOR,  
PROFESSOR OF PSYCHOLOGY  
ARKANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY  
SREB ALUMNA



[Lmcgregor@astate.edu](mailto:Lmcgregor@astate.edu)



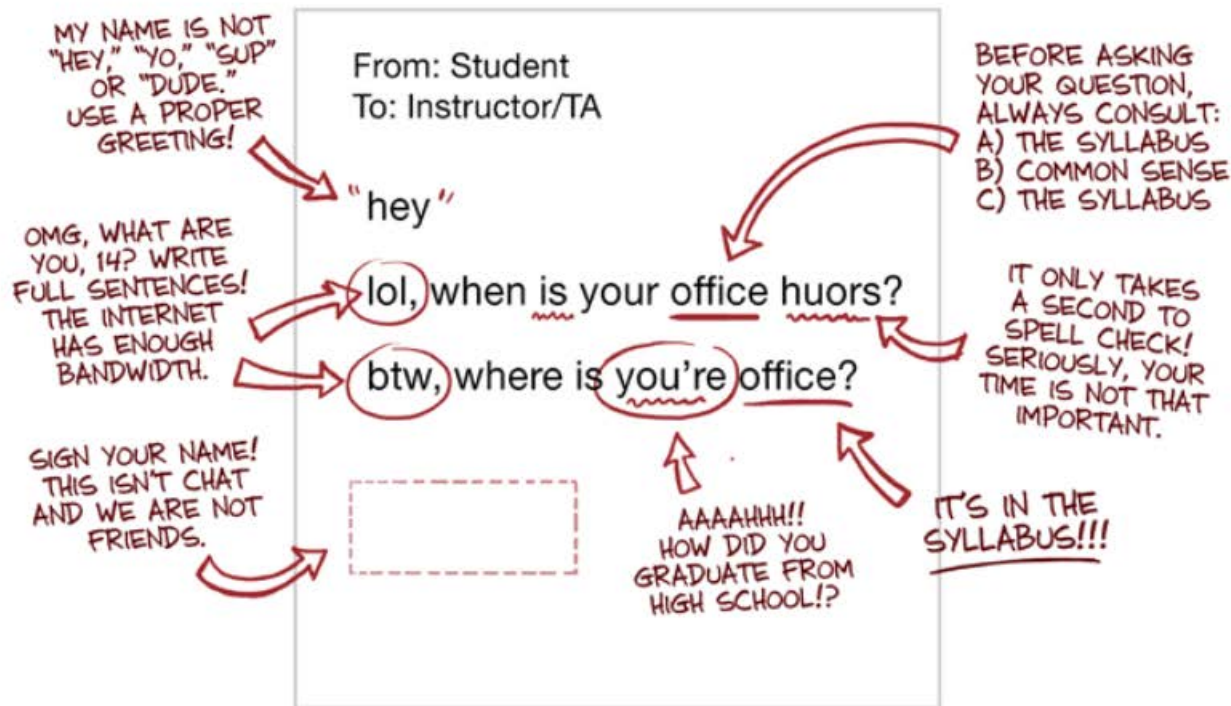
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# IT'S IN THE SYLLABUS

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# HOW TO WRITE AN E-MAIL TO YOUR INSTRUCTOR OR T.A.



# **ASSISTIVE DOCUMENTS**

**LAB APPLICATION AND HOW TO REQUEST A LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION**

Advanced Undergraduate Research Lab  
**Undergraduate Research Assistant Application**

Dr. Loretta Neal McGregor  
Department of Psychology and Counseling

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Student ID: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Number of overall hours completed: \_\_\_\_\_ Number of Psychology hours completed: \_\_\_\_\_

Overall GPA: \_\_\_\_\_ Major GPA: \_\_\_\_\_

Semester(s) to which you are applying:      Fall                      Spring                      Summer

Number of credit hours desired? (1-6 hrs) \_\_\_\_\_

Have you previously worked in a research lab?      Yes                      No

(If yes, please provide the name of the lead professor)      Name of Lead Professor: \_\_\_\_\_

If yes, please list some of your responsibilities.

Please briefly describe your career goals.

Do you have a research idea or area of interest?

Please include a current copy of your transcript. This may be in draft form

FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY:

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Interviewed:

Date of Interview:

Status:

Research interest:

## How to Request Letters of Recommendation

1. Approach the intended letter writer several weeks before your recommendations are due.
2. Formally ask the person if they “believe” they can write a strong letter of recommendation for you.
3. Watch the person’s body language and their overall reaction. If the person appears to hesitate or stutter, allow them to complete their thoughts, thank them for their time, and leave. **DO NOT RETURN TO THEM.**
  - a. Why should you NOT return?
    - i. This person’s letter most likely would not be a strong letter of support since they initially hesitated after your request.
    - ii. If the person was hesitant in their response, they will not seek you out if you do not return.
4. If the person enthusiastically says “yes”, ask if they are willing to do so or if they have time to do so.
5. Thank them and tell the letter writer that you will return with the necessary information and due dates.
6. Secure a brightly colored folder, with pockets, in which you will place all of your documents.
7. You should have a folder for each letter writer.
8. Place the items outlined below into the folders and take them to the letter writers.

### What should you put in the folder?

1. Create a list that contains the name of each degree program to which you are applying.
  - a. Include the exact name of the program.
  - b. Name of the program coordinator or Director of Admissions for the program/department.
  - c. Provide the name of the department and full mailing address for each program.
  - d. Provide the name of the faculty member with whom you would like to work, if you have identified the person.
  - e. Give the due date for each letter of recommendation.
    - i. Your due date should be at least 2-4 weeks **BEFORE** the program deadline.
2. Include a copy of your transcript
  - a. Highlight any courses you have taken with the letter writer.
3. Include a copy of your resume or vita.
4. Include a copy of at least one personal statement which you will submit with your applications.
  - a. Each school may want a statement but your letter writer only needs to see one.

### Final Steps

1. Make sure you waive your rights to view the letters when you complete the online request form for each school. Writers are often more candid in their comments if they can see you have agreed to **NOT** read what they wrote. Programs also view these letters as more helpful than others.
2. Follow up with the graduate school to make sure all of your documents have been received.
3. Follow up with your letter writers to make sure the letters have been completed. It is okay to email them once each week until the letters have been sent. You may also want to resend the invitation link to your letter writers.
4. Thank your letter writers for their efforts. It takes time to write a good letter.
5. Follow up with the letter writer to let them know the status of your applications (i.e., where did you get accepted; were you put on the wait list...).

# **ASSISTIVE DOCUMENTS**

**LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION EXAMPLES**



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College of Education and Behavioral Science – Department of Psychology and Counseling  
P.O. Box 1560, State University, AR 72467 | o: 870-972-3064 | f: 870-972-3862

Saturday, November 30, 20XX

C/O Dr. Tanya N. Davis, Admissions Coordinator  
Educational Psychology with Specialization in Quantitative Method PhD Program  
Baylor School of Education  
One Bear Place #97304  
Baylor University  
Waco, TX 76798-7304

Dear Admissions Selection Committee;

It is with great pleasure that I write this **letter of recommendation on behalf of Garrett Garrett's** application to your doctoral program in *Educational Psychology with a Specialization in Quantitative Method PhD Program* at Baylor University. My recommendation of Garrett is based on his academic performance, leadership skills, and my personal interactions with him.

Garrett is currently enrolled as a graduate student in the Department of Psychology and Counseling. He is pursuing a Specialist degree in Mental Health Counseling. For the past two years, he has also served as my graduate assistant. I have had the pleasure of working with many graduate assistants during my 28+ years in higher education. **I can emphatically state that Garrett ranks as the best graduate assistant I have ever worked with...PERIOD!** My colleague, Dr. Amy Pearce, and I have often remarked that having Garrett as our graduate assistant was like hitting the "GA lottery". He is professional, courteous, conscientious, and eager to learn. He routinely goes beyond the call of duty and manages to impress me more each and every day.

**Garrett graduated Magna Cum Laude with a Bachelor's of Science degree in Psychology**, from Arkansas State University, on December 13, 2014. After graduation, he desired to attend graduate school but had to delay his dream due to financial concerns. He returned to his homeland of Japan and acquired a job working on an international cruise ship, in order to save money for his graduate studies. Even during his time away from the US, Garrett continued to learn about human behavior and to grow his knowledge through his work and personal interactions with passengers on the cruise ship. He has recounted many examples of using the skills and knowledge acquired during his undergraduate years, while working on the ship. His experiences of working with passengers from all over the world served to heighten his interest in human behavior(s) and reinforced his desire to study counseling and psychology at the graduate level. In the fall of 2017, Garrett returned to the United States and Arkansas State University to pursue his dream of graduate study. **He currently has a GPA of 3.875 while completing 51/60 required hours and is on target to graduate with a Specialist degree in Mental Health Counseling in May 2020.**







College of Education and Behavioral Science – Department of Psychology and Counseling  
P.O. Box 1560, State University, AR 72467 | o: 870-972-3064 | f: 870-972-3862

As I mentioned above, Garrett has worked with me in the role of graduate assistant. His initial duties were to assist me with grading student assignments and to conduct database searches. He quickly excelled beyond my expectations and I was compelled to provide him with more challenging learning opportunities. One of those opportunities included assisting Dr. Amy Pearce and I in teaching undergraduate students in a statistics lab. Garrett became the lead instructor in the laboratory courses and worked with students both in and out of the classroom. The students were enamored with him because of his calm demeanor, his ability to clearly explain concepts, and his passion for statistics. He quickly advanced to developing and grading assignments under the watchful eyes of my colleague and me. He even established office hours to answer students' questions outside of the classroom. Holding office hours was not a part of his assigned duties. Nevertheless, he decided that some students could benefit from meeting with him one-on-one and outside of the lab. ***Garrett has a natural talent that encourages student engagement through the use of the Socratic Method. I have never seen a graduate student teach with so much confidence, poise, and passion. I thoroughly enjoy watching him teach.***

Garrett's work in the statistics lab led to him developing a passion for the topic. He asked to "sit-in" on a graduate level statistics course that I taught and he has worked to teach himself the basic concepts of Mixed Methods Analyses and Structural Equation Modeling via the use of SPSS and AMOS statistical software packages. Garrett's desire to grow his knowledge of statistics is indeed rare among graduate students. This is why I believe your program in Educational Psychology with a Specialization in Quantitative Method PhD Program would be an ideal fit for Garrett .

Garrett also worked in my undergraduate research lab. In this capacity, he became one of the supervising student researchers. He made sure the undergraduate students understood the directions for collecting data, he helped analyze data, and he assisted in the creation and dissemination of the research findings through conference presentations. His work in the research lab led him to develop his own research project which culminated in the completion of a master's thesis. ***This is noteworthy because his current master's level degree program does not require a master's thesis.*** He was granted special permission to complete a thesis and I was honored to serve as his committee chair. He recently presented the results of his thesis at the annual conference of the Mid-South Educational Research Association, held in New Orleans, LA, November 6-8, 2019. His thesis presentation was one of three that he authored or co-authored at the conference.

Garrett's goals are to complete his Specialist degree in Mental Health Counseling at Arkansas State University and enter a PhD program with an emphasis on statistics and/or research methods. His ultimate desire is to become a university professor and researcher. Based on his performance as a graduate assistant/student, I have no doubt he will be a phenomenal university professor. I am pleased to serve as his mentor, teacher, and friend; and, I hope to one day add the word "colleague" to our relationship.





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College of Education and Behavioral Science – Department of Psychology and Counseling  
P.O. Box 1560, State University, AR 72467 | o: 870-972-3064 | f: 870-972-3862

Let's be honest, it is very expensive for international students to pursue their studies in US colleges and universities. Additionally, today's political climate has made this pursuit even more challenging for some students. But, Garrett has managed to persevere AND thrive even during these trying times. If your program desires to promote and support exceptional talent, then you **MUST** invite Mr. Garrett Matsuo to be a part of your graduate program. You will not be disappointed! Garrett will quickly become a shining star in your program and subsequently in the profession. **I simply cannot say enough good things about this young man.**

I hope my letter has assisted you in getting to know Mr. Garrett Garrett. **I recommend him with the highest possible endorsement**, for your doctoral program in Educational Psychology with a Specialization in Quantitative Method PhD Program. Please let me know if you have additional questions regarding his worthiness.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Loretta N. McGregor".

Loretta N. McGregor, Ph.D.,  
Professor of Psychology and Counseling  
Arkansas State University  
State University, AR 72467

Strong psychology example



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](mailto:Lmcgregor@astate.edu)

Tuesday, October 25, 2022

ATTN: MMMMM BBBB  
Department of Counseling, Educational Psychology, and Research  
College of Education  
The University of Memphis  
Memphis, TN 38152

Dear Selection Committee Members;

I am writing to recommend Mr. XXXXXX “YYYYYY” ZZZZZZ for your graduate program in Educational Psychology & Research at the University of Memphis. I am pleased to recommend him for this program. My recommendations are based on my many years of working and communicating with YYYYYY. **I rank his ability to perform in your graduate program in the top 10% of all graduate students.**

I have known YYYYYY for 10+ years. I first met him when he enrolled as an undergraduate student at Arkansas State University (ASTATE). As a second semester freshman, YYYYYY registered for a section of Contemporary Psychology which I taught in 2006. *His initial poor performance in the class led to him to withdraw before the end of the semester; he registered again the following year. And although he completed the course the second time around, his classroom performance was lackluster.*

As evident by his transcript, YYYYYY had a rocky start to college. Like many students, he found college to be extremely challenging. His newfound freedom, coupled with a lack of maturity, negatively influenced his academic performance in the classroom. Furthermore, as a **first-generation college student**, many of his experiences were forged by a trial-and-error approach to college. By the time he understood the effects of his extracurricular activities on his academic performance in the classroom, the damage to his overall GPA had been done. But, he persevered and became active in the research lab of a former colleague: Dr. Josie Welsh. He and Dr. Welsh co-presented their research findings at both a regional and national conference. YYYYYY immediately developed a passion for research, and in turn, the discipline of psychology. Moreover, his research involvement became one of the key factors that helped turn around his academic performance in the classroom. His early research involvement also formed the bases for his current career aspirations of becoming a university professor and research.

Recommendation for XXXXXX “YYYYYY” ZZZZZZ

In Aug. 2010, YYYYYYY completed a Bachelor's of Science degree in Psychology. However, like many students, YYYYYYY had given little thought to the idea of pursuing a graduate education until his senior year in college. He knew he was interested in continuing to grow his research skills; but again, he was unsure of the route he should take to do so. He applied to the Specialist in Education degree program in Psychology and Counseling, with an emphasis in school psychology and was accepted.

Although YYYYYYY enjoyed his graduate school experience, he was not sure that he had found his niche in the school psychology program. He discussed his options with his program advisor and decided to slightly alter his course of study. In 2013, YYYYYYY successfully completed the Specialist in Education degree program in Psychology and Counseling with a flexible area of concentration. Furthermore, he graduated with a cumulative GPA of 3.308. This was a huge improvement over his undergraduate GPA of 2.798.

I became better acquainted with YYYYYYY during his senior year in college and during his graduate training in the department. The more I got to know him the more impressed I was with the transformation that had taken place in his life, since our initial meeting. It was evident, to me, that YYYYYYY had grown tremendously over the past few years. Therefore, in my capacity as department chair, I selected YYYYYYY to serve as a graduate teaching assistant within the Department of Psychology and Counseling. The graduate teaching assistantships were the most coveted assistantships offered by our department; and, applications for the positions were accepted only upon recommendation by at least one faculty member or the department chair. We annually accepted only three graduate students to serve as GTA. YYYYYYY held the position until he graduated.

I also served as the immediate supervisor for the graduate teaching assistants and had an opportunity to routinely interact with YYYYYYY. As a GTA, YYYYYYY was responsible for all of the duties performed by any full-time instructor/professor. These duties included preparing and delivering lectures as well as preparing and grading all assignments and exams. YYYYYYY's student evaluations were comparable to those received by full-time faculty members; and, his students' written compliments were glowing. Our daily interactions quickly led me to become one of his biggest cheerleaders and his mentor. His own personal struggles, as a student, served to fuel his passion for teaching.

Upon completion of the specialist degree, I then invited YYYYYYY to become a part-time instructor within the department. His initial assignment was to teach four sections of Introduction to Psychology, each semester. He had taught multiple section of the course as a graduate teaching assistant. Therefore, his transition to adjunct instructor was an easy one. He was later tapped to teach the course online as well as an online section of Developmental Psychology. YYYYYYY currently teaches as an adjunct instructor in the Department of Psychology and Counseling while completing a second master's degree.

Recommendation for XXXXXX "YYYYYYY" ZZZZZZ

Last fall, our department accepted the inaugural class of graduate students into a Master's of Science in Psychology degree program. This program is specifically designed to assist promising students in honing their research skills and psychological knowledge, as a gateway to a terminal degree in psychology. After chatting with YYYYYY, I encouraged him to apply for the program. He was accepted and I invited him to join my research team. His enthusiasm for our research projects reignited his passion for learning. He worked tirelessly on two projects, one of which he conceived and currently serves as principle researcher. This project had a very personal meaning for him.

YYYYYY believed his status as a first-generation college student negatively skewed his perception of college success and, in turn, resulted in his early poor academic performance. He believes that other first-generation students may experience similarly skewed perceptions of college due to their lack of knowledge and familial support. Thus, he has set out to explore whether a relationship exists between parental education and self-efficacy in first-generation college students. We completed the preliminary data collection phase of the project in December 2015 and he presented the findings of his research at the annual conference of the Association for Psychological Science held in Chicago, IL in May of 2017.

This work became the bases of his thesis: *Parental education and perceptions of person self-efficacy*. He has spent the entire semester collecting his thesis data and will defend in Spring of 2018, prior to graduating in May. As someone who has worked with YYYYYY on a research project and now serves as his thesis chair, I can assure you **his enthusiasm and desire to learn and conduct research is genuine**. He has taken on a leadership role in my lab and is currently mentoring two undergraduate students in their research endeavors. I have enjoyed working with YYYYYY and will definitely miss him when he leaves.

I believe YYYYYY would fit well into the EDPR program at the University of Memphis. **In particular, Dr. Leigh Harrell-Williams'** work in the area of self-efficacy would provide a solid foundation for his research interest. YYYYYY also has an interest in statistics. Therefore, he could also benefit from **Dr. Yonghong Jade Xu's** work in multivariate statistical analyses.

*Let's be honest*, you will have many applicants from which you can choose for your program. Some of them will "look stronger" than YYYYYY on paper. But, what his documentation does not accurately reflect is his motivation, passion, and desire to complete a doctoral degree. **YYYYYY will work twice as hard** as any of those other candidates to complete his degree. YYYYYY's struggles through college, graduate school, and with his health, not only left their marks on his transcript but also on his desire to help other students succeed in college. He is an excellent classroom teacher who he goes the extra mile to reach every student. He never gives up on finding ways to teach students who are struggling in his class because he remembers when HE was "THAT"

Recommendation for XXXXXX "YYYYYY" ZZZZZZ

student. **I believe in him!** That is why I'm writing this letter in support of him. My path was similar to YYYYYY's. I, too, was a first-generation college student. I was fortunate that my professors, advisors, and mentors took a chance on me. I now **ask you to take a chance on YYYYYY** and consider him a viable candidate for your program.

**With that said, YYYYYY is the type of student who has the potential to excel in your graduate program, if given the chance.** He is an extremely hard worker; he is smart and he is not afraid to challenge himself in an attempt to grow and learn. Furthermore, he is routinely upbeat and a genuine joy to be around. He makes me laugh and smile multiple times each day. I believe YYYYYY's work ethic and genuine passion for the discipline will allow him to succeed in your graduate program and accomplish his goals. And, I look forward to the day when he can become one of my colleagues in the academy. Therefore, **I highly recommend XXXXXX ZZZZZZ** for your graduate program in Education Psychology & Research *without any reservations*. 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 any additional questions.

Sincerely,

Loretta Neal McGregor, Ph.D., Professor  
Department of Psychology and Counseling  
Arkansas State University  
P.O. Box 1560  
State University, AR 72467  
870-972-3064  
Lmcgregor@astate.edu



To Whom It May Concern:

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

XXXXXXX 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, XXXXXXXX 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 XXXXXXXX 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](mailto: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. XXXXXX 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.

Weak Letter