

February 24, 20xx

Dear Sir or Madam:

I write to support the medical school application of Student Z of YYYY College. Ms. Z was a student in my organic chemistry class during the 20xx-20xx academic year. Z was one of the top students in the class in almost every category. First, she exhibited an enthusiasm for the subject that I find rare in this day when students expect to be taught solely what will be on the test. This enthusiasm manifested itself into frequent questions regarding the theories behind many of the topics we covered in the classroom. We would often debate why a reaction would proceed in a particular manner, and Z would often propose valid arguments for alternative pathways. She is one of the few students who have really challenged me to utilize explanations that are often reserved for an advanced organic chemistry class. Z was also enrolled in my laboratory section, and it was during these times that we had the opportunity to chat about science and other areas outside of science. It was not long before Z became conversant in the language of organic chemistry, and she would often hypothesize about potential applications of the techniques that we were performing in the lab. Z earned A's in both semesters of my class so it goes without saying that Z performed well on my exams. What is *not* obvious is the fact that Z often proposed elegant solutions to my very difficult homework problems, or that she often asked very good questions during lecture. Also not obvious is that only 6 of 42 students received A's or A-'s in my course that semester. Z proved to be very sharp intellectually by being able to apply known paradigms to new situations. I have been at the Claremont Colleges for x years and Z has been the most gifted science student I have ever encountered at YYYY College. I have taught at several top tier institutions throughout my career (Yale, UCLA, Colby, Pitzer, Scripps, and Claremont McKenna), and I easily rank Z in the top 1% of the students that I have encountered in my x years of teaching.

In the lab, Z was the top student in my section of 14. She set herself above her classmates by always being prepared, by learning the concepts behind the techniques (rather than merely following the recipe), by being ultra-efficient, and by exhibiting meticulous technique. She was never the last student to finish and never the first either. The latter arises from the fact that Z was always careful to double-check her work before leaving the lab. I believe these lab skills will serve her well in the practice of medicine.

Aside from her academic prowess, skill in science, and high level of motivation, Z is one of the most pleasant students that I have met. She is polite, happy go lucky, and outgoing. From group exercises that I conduct in class and from my observation of her in the lab, it is obvious to me that Z is well respected by her peers. She is beginning to develop leadership qualities that will make her an excellent practitioner and collaborator in the future. She shows up at group study sessions with baked goods, knowing full well that group dynamics are improved in the process. She is an excellent listener and a quick study. She responds intelligently to questions and possesses a quick wit.

Z's interests are quite diverse. As you may know, she is pursuing a double major in Spanish and Chemistry. She studied abroad in Ecuador last semester and found the time to volunteer at a

local hospital. The stories she told me about her experiences there are heart wrenching, but she tells it with such compassion that one can't help but realize that Z will become an excellent physician. Z went on a hike with a group of students and faculty recently. On the hike, we all got to know each other better and celebrated the end of our day with a barbeque at my home. Z proposed a toast during the dinner that was one of the most eloquent short speeches that I have ever heard. It is clear to me that Z is mature beyond her years. This maturity, her intelligence, and her already poignant life experiences will make her a gem in your medical degree program. I give her my highest recommendation.

Sincerely,

Thomas Poon
Associate Professor of Chemistry