

Dear Admissions Committee,

I am delighted to have the opportunity to offer my highest recommendation for Sue Borchardt, who has applied for Goddard College's master's degree in consciousness studies.

Last spring, Sue was a student in my course, "Reading and Writing the Memoir." During the first class, I asked students to do a "free write" in which they described their earliest memory. When Sue read hers aloud, I immediately sensed she was a person of great intelligence, sensitivity, and, perhaps most important of all, curiosity. Her free write was as much about interrogating the act of remembering as it was about the memory itself--which, if my own memory serves, was about being attacked by a dog when she was a child.

From that first evening on, Sue distinguished herself from the other students by her interest in the workings of memory, which is to say her interest in how the mind records and stores (or discards) information. That interest meant she brought a multidisciplinary lens to bear on everything, continually bridging what often seems like a vast divide between the art of memoir and the science of biochemistry. One of the requirements of the course asked students to read a memoir and give a critical oral report about it to the class. Sue requested to modify the assignment and instead delivered a 15-minute mini-lecture on the process of memory. The other students listened with rapt attention, making it obvious that Sue had affected them with both her passion and her knowledge. It struck me that should she ever desire a career in teaching, she'd be a natural.

Aside from her interest in memory, Sue showed herself to be a lively and engaged literary critic, reading deeply into each text and raising insightful questions during class discussions. She's an independent thinker, not anchored to any particular school of thought, and that means she's both open to new ideas and healthily skeptical of them: a great combination.

Last, let me say that in her own creative writing, Sue exhibits the same adventurous spirit I see in her intellectual life. She wrote a first draft of a memoir and after we discussed it, she totally dismantled it and wrote

a second draft that was essentially a new piece. Rarely in my decade of teaching have I seen a student so willing to take the risk of completely destroying her work in order to create something new and hopefully better, and I admire Sue for her bravery, energy, and commitment to quality.

I hope I've conveyed that Sue Borchardt would be an excellent addition to the consciousness studies masters program. She's a creative thinker who's dedicated to asking questions and pursuing answers--a true intellectual and creative omnivore--and I can guarantee that she will thrive in your program.

Please feel free to contact me with questions.

Sincerely,

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