

Friday, 2nd February 2024

Dear NSF ETAP Selection Committee:

My name is Todd Heibel, and I am Professor of Geography-GIS and Faculty Co-Chair for Geography-GIS and Geology-Oceanography at San Bernardino Valley College (SBVC). I wholeheartedly recommend Ms. Araceli Duron for the CSU-Monterey Bay Research Experiences for Undergraduates (REU) Oceanography and Marine Sciences research program.

Although I have known Ms. Duron for just a short period of time, through our in-person conversations and email correspondence, it is clear that she is an ideal candidate for your summer oceanography and marine sciences research program. Dr. Leif Andersen, Araceli's Physics Professor, introduced us. Dr. Andersen observed Araceli's enthusiasm for Physics, Oceanography, and STEM. Beyond mere enthusiasm, Ms. Duron has excelled in challenging STEM courses, including calculus, chemistry, oceanography, and physics. Her inclusion on the Dean's List and 3.8 GPA are testimony to her aptitude and dedication.

Beyond the classroom, Araceli has been an active, contributing member of the STEM-MESA Program, STEM-MESA Student Club, and Alpha Gamma Sigma (AGS) student honor and service society. Beyond STEM, she has performed in two SBVC Theater Department productions. She has also served as assistant director in a SBVC Film, TV, and Media (FTVM) production.

Ms. Duron has earned several SBVC Foundation Scholarships in past years. These scholarships are competitive, and they provide further evidence of the college's confidence in her ability to succeed. In conversations with her calculus, chemistry, oceanography, and physics professors, I have gained clearer insight into Araceli's ability to succeed under challenging circumstances.

Araceli wants to rely on her own abilities, intelligence, and fastidiousness to succeed. She does not want to burden her family with undue student loans and associated expenses. She is a talented, gifted Latina who will undoubtedly pave the way for other girls and young women who look like her.

The marine and ocean sciences will greatly benefit from Araceli's contributions. This is a field that must continue to expand its diversity and reach. I urge you to select her for the summer Monterey Bay REU Program. Your support of this most worthy candidate will pay dividends for the fields of marine science and oceanography, and it will serve as a reminder that there is room for diverse voices within these fields.

Please reach out with any questions and concerns. I am delighted to speak with you at length about this most qualified candidate.

Gratefully,

Dr. Todd Heibel, Geography-GIS Professor and Co-Chair
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