



**WESTERN  
ILLINOIS  
UNIVERSITY**

April 23, 2015

### Letter of Recommendation for Ryan Sullivan

To Whom It May Concern:

It has been our sincerest pleasure to have employed Mr. Ryan Sullivan as our Graduate Assistant for the 2014-15 academic year for the Department of Curriculum and Instruction at Western Illinois University. Our GA positions are highly sought-after, but Ryan rose to the top as an easy choice because of his obvious intelligence and the impressive academic and personal accomplishments outlined in his application materials. After we hired Ryan, we chose him to work in our highly-visible main office position because he stood out from our other fine GA's due to his courteous personality, hospitable nature and admirable character. We could see immediately that he would be a person that could represent our department in a positive light and be able to handle the variety of requests from all types of people he would encounter in a cheerful and resourceful manner. Ryan has met these expectations and exceeded them consistently, and has become a beloved and indispensable member of our department.

Ryan has the ability to confidently meet any request posed to him, despite his knowledge base. If he doesn't know how to complete a task he happily accepts it anyway, assuring us that he will figure out the best way to accomplish it. He then researches solutions, comes up with the most sensible option, and instructs us all on how to complete it as well. Ryan embraces the most difficult assignments with a spirit of adventure, showing delight when we challenge his intelligence and resourcefulness, and attacks projects with a confident, positive attitude that is an inspiration to others in the office. Ryan is far from arrogant, however; he is amazingly humble given his talents, and is quick to compliment the efforts and achievements of everyone, encouraging them, and appreciating their efforts. Ryan will make a wonderful teacher and mentor for these reasons; he puts people at ease, makes them feel good about themselves, and cheers them along to do their best.

Ryan's intelligence and quick wit is best seen in his sense of humor and fun-loving attitude. He always smiles and comments on other's jokes with kindness and a thoughtful word. And he has a wonderful way of coming up with just the right thing to say to make everyone laugh and add levity to the situation. He never criticizes anyone, anything or any circumstance; instead he smiles and looks at the silver lining which he always seems to find despite the circumstances.

Ryan has made the most significant contribution to our department through his work in launching our social media campaign. He created a Twitter, Instagram and

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YouTube account for us, and took over the administration of our Facebook account. New to social media himself, Ryan immersed himself in the culture, researching it online and talking with students to see what the most popular formats were, and what constituted relevant and enticing material that would interest users. He became our social media guru, and posted everyday about events going on in our department, the university, or in the education field in general. Our social media sites increased steadily in likes, followers, shares and re-tweets, and traffic to our department website was increased as well.

Ryan became our resident website guru as well, playing an integral part in growing our department website and keeping it updated. He is very tech-savvy, and quickly learned enough about html and page layout to add a Twitter feed to our home page, create a new Employment Opportunities page, and to find new and more attractive way to post photographs and graphics. Most importantly, Ryan is an excellent writer, and composed engaging articles and headlines promoting events on our web pages after being given only a handful of facts, interviewing faculty and students for additional information as needed. He also designed a number of online registration forms and surveys to increase engagement with our audiences.

Ryan was also a valued asset to our faculty members directly. He proctored exams, held classes, administered instructor evaluations and helped out with many special projects. His creativity and artistic ability was a great asset in promoting our faculty's special events such as Movie Night, as he became our poster artist and tagline copywriter, able to compose clever headlines and attractive designs using a variety of software including PowerPoint, Word and Gimp.

Ryan also proved himself as a video producer, videographer and video editor by creating for our department's debut video for our YouTube channel, an interview of our Graduate Committee Chair about our award-winning Elementary Education Master's program. Ryan came up with thought-provoking questions to ask, obtained the necessary video equipment and software and learned to use it, bravely coordinated the interview with the faculty member and conducted the interview, downloaded it and edited it utilizing the resources of our lab and technical assistants, added his own creative touches, and then uploaded it to our YouTube channel which he created, ensuring it was transcribed accurately to conform to our university's ADA regulations.

Ryan is proficient in the Microsoft Word Office Suite and is skilled at using Excel, Word and Powerpoint. He is also a fast typist, which came in very useful for transcribing student comments from instructor evaluations into our database. He is also highly organized keeping his desk and electronic files neat and well-labeled, ready for any of us to step in as needed and be able to find things. Ryan is detailed oriented, takes pride in the quality of his work, and prioritizes tasks to make the best use of his time and department resources.

The projects we asked Ryan to handle weren't always as glamorous as these mentioned above, but he nonetheless completed every assignment with the same care and attention no matter how mundane. Ryan maintains an attitude of gratitude in his life, always looking on the bright side, looking for ways to make the best out of any situation. He is a compassionate person as well, showing respect and kindness for all people he encountered here, from the small children and infants, to the senior professors with outdated jokes, to the international students with broken English, to visitors bewildered by our confusing building, to those with intellectual or physical disabilities, to the most intimidating of accomplished university administrators. Ryan showed compassion especially to our students, both undergraduates and graduates, and to their families, knowing innately that they are the real reason we are all here. And Ryan takes good care of himself as well as others, enjoying athletic pursuits, healthy food and wholesome activities which gives him a great deal of energy and endurance. We could always expect to see Ryan arrive early with a smile, and leave late with the same smile intact, despite the fact that his daily commute was one hour here and one hour back each day.

It is with heavy hearts that we will say goodbye to Ryan Sullivan, and we would keep him here forever if we could. He will be missed greatly by all of us, not as much for the tremendous asset he has been to our department, but because we have all grown to rely on him and to love him as our friend and our family. But we are excited for the invaluable contributions we know he will make in the next organization for which he works, and are heartened for the lives that we know he will touch in the most meaningful of ways.

Sincerely,

Michele Mussatto, Graduate Assistant Coordinator  
Curriculum and Instruction Department  
Western Illinois University