



Department of Mathematics

March 7, 2011

To: Middle School or Secondary School Teachers and Administrators

Re: Professional Recommendation of Meg Claypool for a Position in Mathematics

As a long-time coordinator of Mathematics Teacher Preparation and Development at Humboldt State University, I am delighted to write a letter of recommendation for Margaret (Meg) Claypool. I have know Meg for almost 8 years, during which time I have served as her academic advisor, math and math education professor, and professional development instructor. These roles have provided me with substantial insight into Meg's professional character and effectiveness as a teacher. In both of these respects, I consider Meg to be in the top 10% of all of the teachers with whom I have worked over the past 20 years. Thus, I strongly recommend your serious consideration of her application.

One of my primary criteria for recommending teachers for positions in middle or secondary mathematics classrooms is their mastery of the subject matter. Research shows that the deep content knowledge of a teacher (not merely a title or degree) makes a significant difference in student learning. Meg has a remarkably deep understanding of mathematics, particularly that which is relevant for middle and high school. When I first met Meg at Humboldt State University (HSU), she had already earned a teaching credential in French. She could have taken the "short cut" to a math credential by taking a California Subject Examination for Teachers in math. Instead, she chose a two-year course of study to get a mathematics degree and become a subject matter expert. During those two years she was recognized for her mathematical success with a named scholarship from the Math Department. Her depth of knowledge allows her to teach courses from arithmetic and pre-algebra through calculus and statistics. As former head of the math department, I would have been happy to hire her to teach at HSU and to welcome her into our graduate program.

Another of my primary criteria for recommending teachers is their demonstrated effectiveness with students from a variety of backgrounds. I have observed Meg work very effectively with students from elementary school through college. She has been an effective tutor, an effective mentor to her younger math colleagues, an effective classroom manager and teacher of large middle-school algebra classes, and an effective leader of calculus students. Her presentation style is clear and motivating. Her communication style conveys her enthusiasm for her discipline and her intellectual curiosity and honesty. She is a technological wizard, making the most of limited resources to engage students and motivate their intellectual development. Most importantly, her students learn.

Meg Claypool has such a thirst for learning and her own improvement, that I believe she has just begun to demonstrate her potential as a classroom teacher. She will only get better with time and opportunity. She is personable, trustworthy, and encouraging of others. She is and will be an excellent colleague.

Please contact me if you have need of additional information or clarification.

Sincerely,

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