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To Whom it May Concern:

I am writing to recommend Ms. Jacqueline DiBella for the position of Director of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility Position in your organization's DEIA department. I have had the pleasure of working with Ms. DiBella for 6 years as her student, teaching assistant, and the Founding President of the GCC Multicultural Communications Club at SUNY Genesee Community College (GCC) and have been consistently impressed by her commitment to diversity and inclusion at the college.

My paths crossed with Ms. DiBella in the Spring of 2009 when I joined her Interpersonal Communications class at GCC so I would escape the Public Speaking class. Don't we all prefer being in the casket to giving a Eulogy? I introduced myself during the icebreaker activity and to my dismay nobody had heard about Tanzania. My assignment, therefore, was to prepare a speech about my country which forced me out of my comfort zone as I grew personally and professionally as her Teaching Assistant under her mentorship.

As an international student, I, and many others, felt like outsiders. Although I spoke English fluently, I still felt a degree of insecurity. Imagine how overwhelmed other international students felt, whose first language was not English. This resulted in most of them being isolated and staying in their comfort zones, further increasing the diversity gap, and diminishing confidence. While we appreciated the college organizing Thanksgiving dinners and Christmas events, there wasn't truly an effort made to learn from the international students. What is adding one more flag to the Student Union if one has not learned anything about the international student, their culture, traditions, foods, music, or language? An opportunity lost.

During her time at GCC as an Adjunct Professor, Ms. DiBella has demonstrated a deep understanding of the issues facing the international student population and has been an advocate for their well-being. She has actively engaged in creating a more inclusive and equitable environment by developing and leading initiatives that foster a sense of belonging and respect for all students. Ms. DiBella recognized the adversity that international students faced when coming to a foreign country, especially given the language barrier and culture shock. Ms. DiBella assumed the responsibility of bridging the interaction between international students and domestic students - uniting East and West. Thus, the GCC Multicultural Communications Club was born, and the subsequent "East Meets West" Annual Event at GCC with the sole purpose to inspire.

Ms. DiBella is what I like to call a “Mover and Shaker”. She is known for her ability to generate ideas, create change, and inspire others to follow her lead. She can think outside the box and approach problems from a fresh perspective. She is not afraid to take risks and challenge the status quo, which is where so many international students acquired encouragement and strength from. Ms. DiBella has a way of connecting with others and getting them excited about the present and the future! This characteristic has played a crucial role in shaping all international students that crossed paths with her. Ms. DiBella is the catalyst for change, and her ideas and actions can have a lasting impact on society for years to come. She built a culture of belonging and support.

Ms. DiBella has also shown excellent communication and interpersonal skills when working with individuals from diverse backgrounds. She has a talent for connecting with people and creating an atmosphere of trust and respect. Her ability to listen actively and respond sensitively to different perspectives is particularly noteworthy.

Finally, I would like to highlight Ms. DiBella's dedication to continuous learning and professional development. She has attended numerous workshop and training programs focused on diversity, equity, and inclusion- fostering inclusive environment – improving engagement and has successfully integrated her learnings into the academia environment. She is a high-performance leader with experience and expert knowledge in diversity. She is unstoppable.

I am confident that Ms. DiBella would make a valuable addition to your DEIA department. Her passion, expertise, and commitment to creating a more equitable and inclusive environment are truly commendable.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any further questions or require additional information.

Sincerely,

Khilna Samat

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