



## SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY

MAXWELL SCHOOL OF CITIZENSHIP AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS  
*Alan K. Campbell Public Affairs Institute*

January 15<sup>th</sup>, 2016

Dear Members of the Outstanding Teaching Assistant Selection Committee:

I write on behalf third-year History Ph.D. student Scarlett Rebman to support wholeheartedly her nomination for recognition as an Outstanding Teaching Assistant. Scarlett is truly a gifted teacher and scholar who is extraordinarily deserving of this honor. I have worked with her over the past two-and-a-half years as her advisor, teacher, and mentor and she has previously served as a TA in my History 102: America Since 1865 course in the Spring of 2015. I can say without hesitation that she is an exemplary young educator and a master at her craft, something I can rarely state about a student at this stage in their graduate career. Scarlett has a seemingly indefatigable work ethic and passion for the task of historical inquiry. Her enthusiasm has proven infectious for her students.

When I observed Scarlett leading one of her discussion sections in History 102, I saw a teacher fully engaged and comfortable in front of her class. Her lesson plan was well-paced, thoughtfully prepared, and drew all twenty of her students into healthy participation and a nuanced investigation of our themes for the week. It was clear that she commanded the respect of the entire class and inspired a depth of analysis that was astonishing for an introductory survey course. With ease, she guided the students through a wide range of primary sources and steadily helped the class to find unifying threads. It was a pleasure to watch her class in action.


Rarely have I had undergraduates spontaneously contact me to heap praise upon their TA, but in Scarlett's case her students proved to be so inspired by her passion for the subject matter that I received several e-mails celebrating her talents. One of these students wrote, "I felt compelled to email you because that evaluation form could not do her justice ... Scarlett's dedication to every student in my discussion was refreshing. Her appreciation for every participant's input, even when minute, was motivating and oftentimes inspiring. As an undecided student who initially took this course to fulfill requirements, not only have I finished with a tremendously greater understanding of U.S. history ... but I have also gained a new sense of confidence in my own analytical skills thanks to Scarlett." This is what I think every professor hopes for from their Teaching Assistants in whom we place so much trust and responsibility. Scarlett's presence as a part of our team in History 102 undoubtedly made it a better course.

Scarlett's enthusiasm and effort in teaching, however, has not hindered her progress towards her degree. She has made remarkable progress and will have advanced to candidacy several months ahead of schedule by the time she defends her dissertation proposal in early March. Her passion for history that is so readily on display in her classrooms also infuses her research. As a result,

her dissertation promises to be an invaluable contribution to historical scholarship on the evolution of urban policy and racial inequality in the United States during the 20<sup>th</sup> Century.

I can assure you that Scarlett is a unique talent and an exceptional candidate for this award. I am happy to elaborate further on her behalf if it may assist in your evaluation. Please feel free to contact me by phone at (609) 510-1813 or by email at [jdgonda@maxwell.syr.edu](mailto:jdgonda@maxwell.syr.edu). Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jeffrey D. Gonda', written in a cursive style.

Jeffrey D. Gonda  
Assistant Professor of History  
Faculty Associate, Campbell Public Affairs Institute  
Maxwell School of Citizenship & Public Affairs  
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