



December 18, 2009

Dear Scholarship Committee,

I am pleased to write this letter supporting the applications of KELLY TAVARES. In her position as Exhibit Curator at the Mills International Center (of which I am the Coordinator), Kelly organizes art exhibits, one every term, to show here in the Mills Center. Supervising her since July 2009, I have had many opportunities to see her ability to think on a large conceptual scale; her sophisticated understanding of what art can accomplish; her exceptional capacity to bring complex plans to fruition; her remarkable and unusual combination of warmth and skill in collaborating with people; and her passion for community engagement.

Kelly's ability to think on a large conceptual scale — about relationships among art exhibits, institutions, and community groups — shows clearly in the way she creates exhibits for the Mills International Center. For example, after finding out during the summer that India would be the theme for our week of activities in November 2009, Kelly independently conceived of and organized a photography show for the entire fall term featuring photography from India by Eugene photographers. She initiated a new collaboration with the UO Cultural Forum such that every show she organizes extends from the Mills Center into two gallery spaces in the Erb Memorial Union. This partnership benefits both organizations, and was entirely at Kelly's initiative. It has been so successful, both in financial and programming terms, that it will continue for the full year.

In fact, Kelly's sophisticated understanding about what an art exhibit can accomplish ranges far beyond the simple viewing of art objects. She conceives exhibits that support the outreach mission of the Mills Center, that attract new audiences to the Center, that expand viewers' horizons as global citizens, and that build connections to the larger Eugene/Springfield community.

Kelly shows exceptional initiative as she brings complex projects to fruition. I've never encountered an employee here who plans so well and capably in advance. She is completely reliable and dependable. Her capacity to implement plans is remarkable.

Here at the Mills Center, Kelly is a member of a 12-person staff comprised of people from 8 different countries. She works closely with our graphic designer,

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publicity manager, program managers, and resource consultants. She is well-liked by her colleagues, and is remarkable in the way she relates to them both as a warm human being, and as a colleague who is clear regarding work to be done and deadlines to be met. In my experience, she possesses a remarkable and unusual combination of abilities critical to working well with people.

Finally, Kelly has a passion for community engagement and for democratic practices in cultural work. It is abundantly evident that she lives her beliefs. In every exhibit she organizes for the Mills Center, she builds more bridges among people and groups. She thrives on collaboration.

Kelly is a kind of visionary and a real asset to the University of Oregon. I hope she can be assisted with scholarship support. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely yours,

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