



November 30, 2005

Dear Applications Committee,

When I met Alex Guenther in the Munich editorial offices of WorldGuide Publishing, I recognized him immediately as one of those expatriate Americans who feels perfectly at home abroad. During my own travels as the child of a Foreign Service officer, I met people from a variety of countries for whom nationality was but a label, or a starting point for lively conversation. My fourth-grade teacher at the American Cooperative School of Tunis, an English woman with a passion for archeology, was one such person. She dedicated much of her free time to taking students to Carthage to see the magnificent baths and aqueducts the Romans had built on the Mediterranean coast. The passion for language, history, and culture that made Mrs. Somaï an important influence on me as a student is a quality I see very clearly in Alex Guenther.

Alex's talent as an editor and writer reflects this, too. He has great potential as a scholar of linguistics, an aptitude that will certainly inform his studies to become a teacher of English as a Second Language. He learned German very quickly when he joined our staff as the Events Section Editor, and was always keen to learn more about the way the language was structured. His love of etymology inspired him to read texts in Old and Middle German in his free time. Never before have I encountered a person so thoroughly enamored of linguistic building blocks, and of etymology in general. Through his study of German, he gained a valuable perspective on what it is like to approach a new language, an experience that would be of great use when helping international students to master English.

In my own studies, at Georgetown's School of Foreign Service, and at graduate school at the University of Virginia, I admired those students and professors who excelled at both oral and written argumentation. Alex is a hardy and effective communicator, no matter the medium. His dependable, accurate work as our Copy Editor at WorldGuide demonstrated this, as did his tutoring work with students from the Munich International School. He would make a dedicated, active, and passionate teacher. His openness to ideas that counter his own and his ease with others during debate make Alex an ideal candidate for teaching students in an international setting. His patience and ability to explain how things function, which I witnessed as he trained our staff in html coding over several years, reveal his affinity for the profession.

I wholeheartedly recommend you accept Alex for graduate-level studies. I am convinced that his love of foreign cultures coupled with a sharp wit and a good sense of humor will make him a boon to your program. Alex has a natural talent with young people that should by all means be cultivated so that students can benefit from it. I wish that all teachers could be as loving and dedicated as Mrs. Somaï was at the Tunis international school. In Alex Guenther you have an excellent candidate for continuing this important tradition.

Please feel free to contact me if I can be of any further assistance.

Best regards,

Claudine Weber-Hof
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