

Re-imagining the letter of recommendation

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Agenda

- History/Background
- Role of the letter of recommendation
- Counselor vs. Teacher recommendation
- Hybrid concept
- Discussion

History and Background

- 1st Gen Filipino American, cis gender male/husband/father of two kids, and my pronouns are he/him/his
- 4th season at Presentation; all-girls Catholic high school in San Jose
- 9 seasons in college admissions at two selective institutions



Role of the letter of recommendation

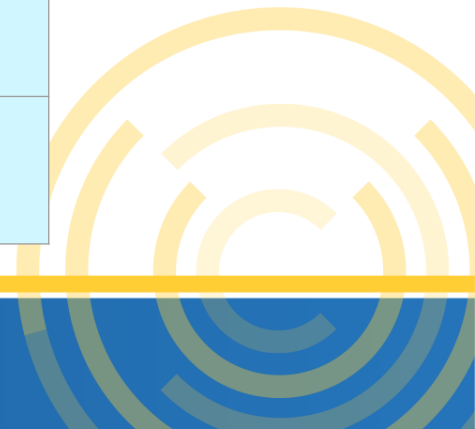
- School official perspective
 - Specific insight
- Context and nuance
 - Course schedule (e.g. academic context)
 - Contributions (e.g. impact and influence)
 - Character (e.g. who they are/who they will be)

What the letter of rec shouldn't do...

- Be generic or too good to be true
 - Teenagers, not super humans
 - By far...One of the...
- Repeat the chorus
 - Grades and scores
 - Naming activities
 - Overlap and redundancy

What colleges want in the letter of rec

COUNSELOR	TEACHER
Landscape	Portrait
Student within the larger context	Student within the classroom environment
Breadth	Depth
Perspective	Academic Insight
Observations	Evaluations



Counselor Rec v. Teacher Rec

COUNSELOR	TEACHER
Quality of character	Knowledge of content area
Special circumstances/student's background	Work ethic in classroom setting
Rigor of coursework	Intellectual curiosity
Quality of mind	Classroom anecdotes
Anecdotes	Academic Perseverance

Hybrid Concept

- Efficiency and organization
- Specific sections
 - Descriptors; Distinguished Qualities
 - Academic context
 - Areas of Engagement
 - Impact/Influence
 - Summary

Sample Counselor hybrid letter



Sample Teacher hybrid letter

SHARE, LEARN
— AND —
C  **NNECT**

Discussion

- Questions
- Observations
- Comments

Connect

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