Dear Committee Members,

This letter is to support the nomination of Dr. Leslie Ashburn-Nardo for the Alvin S. Bynum Mentor Award. It is a pleasure and honor to recommend Dr. Ashburn-Nardo for this award, as she has played a very important role in my personal and professional development and proved to be a true mentor and a friend.

As a recent immigrant to the United States from Russia, in the beginning of my studies at IUPUI I found myself in a completely unfamiliar educational system, with a strong desire to learn, but little understanding of how to succeed in this completely new world. When I met Dr. Ashburn-Nardo through one of my classes (Research Methods), she has become my advisor and mentor. She was very perceptive and open, she saw my struggle to adjust, and was the first teacher to make me feel comfortable and confident enough to start thriving. Through her knowledge and enthusiasm, she showed me the intellectual wealth and opportunities that the life of an academic has to offer.

Inspired by her, I became Dr. Ashburn-Nardo's research assistant. In our multiple discussions, she revealed to me how social psychological research may significanlty complement my keen interest in social issues. As my research mentor, she lit my interest in social psychology, cherished it and helped to develop it into a skill which has become crucial for my future career.

I was not assigned to Dr. Ashburn-Nardo by the university, she was not expected to spend time advising me, but I felt that her door was always open for me, and I walked through it quite frequently. Whether I needed advice on what class to take, how to interpret a statistical analysis, or what to make of a certain peculiarity of American mentality, she was always there to talk, discuss, answer, and explain. Now that I am an advanced Ph.D. student, I realize how busy a young assistant professor must be, and appreciate even more all the time she was willing to spend on me.

Dr. Ahsburn-Nardo has played a very important role in my life. She encouraged me to go to graduate school, guided me through this process, and stood by me through the painful rejections and happy acceptance letters. In every step of the way she was there for me – above and beyond of what is required of a teacher, advisor, or even a mentor; therefore, I consider Dr. Ashburn-Nardo – Leslie – a friend and a role model, and strongly, sincerely, and enthusiastically support her nomination for a Mentor Award.

Please, do not hesitate to contact me should you have any questions or need additional information.

Sincerely,

Katya Migacheva, M.S., Ph.D. student

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