

This letter is in reference to Catherine Schoemaker and her application to the Master of Nursing Program within the Advanced Clinical Focus Nurse Practitioner stream at the University of Alberta. I was first introduced to Catherine during the fall of 2018. Catherine was a student of mine in a senior level theory course entitled Principles of Teaching and Learning: Nurse as Educator. The focus of the learning involved integrating theoretical foundations related to pedagogical approaches and learning theories. In addition, students explored the role of the nurse as educator relative to the concept of health education as an intervention to empower clients to achieve their wellness potential, ultimately to improve quality of care outcomes and quality of life. The nurse as educator role was also explored as it relates to nursing education of students and intra-disciplinary colleagues; emphasizing quality of care practices and the phenomenon of competency and leadership as they contribute to quality-of-care outcomes. Catherine stood out for her inquiring mind and deep pursuit of understanding course learning experiences and knowledge.

Catherine was actively engaged in the class, consistently sharing her perspective, and fostering collaborative learning. During an extensive peer education project that involved integration of theoretical and experiential knowledge and understanding, Catherine worked effectively with a peer to research evidence informed parenting styles and their impact on child development, in addition to risk factors associated with sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS). She co-planned an extensive three-hour lesson covering content related to SIDS and childhood development as influenced by parenting styles, engaged in co-teaching junior nursing students, and completed a written analysis of her learning from this project through synthesizing multiple sources of feedback, including self-reflective feedback. Catherine employed a shared leadership approach that was inclusive and exhibited the capacity to recognize and acknowledge the strengths and abilities of her co-teaching colleague, managing conflict that arose through effective communication and collaborative decision-making.

Catherine was an attentive and intuitive student. She was motivated to learn and open to receiving feedback to promote personal and professional growth. Catherine sought out many occasions to work with others through various experiential learning opportunities within the course, clearly demonstrating her relational capacity. Catherine was cognizant of her approach and embraced peer relationships in a manner that was authentic and expressed respect, cultivated trust, and honored diversity. Catherine embraced learning new concepts and skills with an open, inquisitive mind and a positive attitude. In addition to the 'what' and 'how' of learning, Catherine had a keen sense of the importance of understanding why knowledge was significant within a given context. As such, she was able to think critically, and transfer knowledge dialogically between her nursing practice experience and learning in theory. Achieving a GPA of 3.83/4.0 within her undergraduate nursing education given her life circumstances as a single mother, reflects her commitment and capacity to succeed at the graduate level.

Since graduating in 2019, Catherine has worked with the adult population in long term care where she assumed a leadership role as charge nurse, supporting comprehensive care in collaboration with an interdisciplinary team. For the past five years, Catherine has experience providing comprehensive care in adult acute care, where she has encountered medical and surgical patients with varied diagnoses. During the past two and half years Catherine has developed strong leadership and coaching skills within her role as preceptor to university students completing their final practicums. In her role as charge nurse, Catherine has served as a disciplinary leader coaching and mentoring colleagues and collaborating with the interdisciplinary team to coordinate and mobilize care to optimize patient outcomes. The experience Catherine has acquired to date serves as a solid foundation to support the role and responsibilities of a nurse practitioner.

Catherine's scholarly capacity and commitment to learning and professional leadership are evident in her pursuit of professional development opportunities including attending workshops and completing courses and modules to support an evidence-informed approach to practice. Of note within her application is her desire to lead a multidisciplinary team and contribute to the care of adolescents and adults suffering with complex mental health trauma, addictions, and related dissociation. Catherine's personal lived experience healing from severe, early childhood trauma positions her well to relate to her population of interest both personally and professionally. Catherine's passion for and attitude towards learning are a testament to her sense of self-direction and self-awareness, excellent qualities associated with thriving as a nurse practitioner.

Through interactions with Catherine, I have come to appreciate that maturity, self-motivation, and dedication are qualities that characterize her. She strives for excellence in all she does. Her sense of integrity and compassion are evident in her exemplary relational capacity, attitude towards others, and desire to provide comprehensive care. I firmly believe that Catherine would be an asset to your program.

Sincerely,

Tracey L. Clancy

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