Letter of Reference for Tchet Dorman

It is with great pleasure that I write this letter of reference for my colleague and friend, Tchet Dorman. Tchet has had an incredibly positive influence on my teaching, and on my overall experience at Temple. Tchet is a true lifeline for me, and for many others, and I have the utmost respect and admiration for his life’s work in building a movement toward social justice through authentic and meaningful dialogue.

I first met Tchet several years ago at one of the many informal dialogues he organized. I had been to my share of diversity workshops and seminars and wasn’t expecting a “new” experience. But I was wrong. Tchet’s truly unique way of creating both a comforting and challenging atmosphere was intriguing and invigorating. Tchet’s ability to “put himself out there” in a humble and engaging manner fostered a disarmingly open environment. Sitting amongst professors, administrators, and staff, few of whom I had ever met, I quickly became excited by an experience that felt very new, and very powerful. This was not a formulaic workshop but an organic exploration of our struggles with race and gender, in an intentionally diverse group. Tchet’s facilitation allowed me to dig deeper into myself and to want to dig deeper with others. One of his mantras, “people are just people” really stuck with me and has greatly increased my optimism and energy in the classroom, in my department, and in my overall work experience—so simple yet so difficult to hold onto when experiencing contentious or stressful interactions. Soon I began participating in and co-facilitating other dialogues with Tchet and others around issues of not only race and gender but around class, sexuality, religion, and disability. Tchet’s bravery in “intergroup” dialogues around any issue emboldened me to approach these issues without many of my previous fears. Witnessing Tchet’s genuine desire and determination to help foster meaningful, authentic relationships across so many different groups has been energizing and truly inspiring.

Tchet’s seemingly tireless and innovative efforts to build and expand the use of dialogues is very time consuming and can be emotionally and intellectually draining. Yet I watch Tchet continue these pursuits eagerly and with great vigor. With every upcoming dialogue, Tchet leads the way in scheduling and organizing planning meetings as well as debriefing sessions. He always prepares and distributes detailed outlines, helpful readings, links, and encourages critical and constructive feedback. He is amazingly patient with mine and other people’s complicated schedules and last minute changes, and always seems to find a way to “make it work”. Additionally, Tchet shows an appreciation and enthusiasm for me as a co-
facilitator that reveals genuine interest in my personal development, and care for me as a person. Indeed, it is this appreciation and enthusiasm for people in general that makes myself and others want to work with Tchet. It is these qualities, along with his serious and innovative commitment to social justice that makes me honored and so grateful to call Tchet my friend.

Sincerely,

Mary Stricker, Ph.D.
Assoc. Professor, Teaching