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**Letter of Support for Alicia Urdapilleta who is applying for Participation in the DIMACS program**

Alicia Urdapilleta is an outstanding Mexican American student.

Alicia came highly recommended from Mills College to my summer REU. We had a student from that program in the summer of 2001, who did extremely well and who is about to complete her Ph.D. Alicia's letters from Mills were stronger. Alicia participated in my 2001 summer REU. The research was solid and won an award at a meeting in Puerto Rico. Their project involved genetics and behavior. Alicia took a fellowship offer from Rice University in 2002 but after two years, she decided to leave because her interests in mathematical biology (immunology of cancer) were not met at Rice. So despite Richard Tapia's efforts to keep her she decided to re-apply and got a four-year fellowship offer from Cornell's University Center for Applied Mathematic. She spent considerable time looking for a potential advisor at Cornell but was not satisfied with her options, so she decided to come to ASU and work under the co-supervision of Yang Kuang, a leader in mathematical biology who has done some significant work in cancer, and myself. Alicia has passed three qualifiers and is seriously involved in research. I expect her to become a Ph.D. candidate in a year.

Alicia is *extremely* hard working, highly devoted to her studies and in love with research. She loves mathematics and is determined to succeed. She will! Alicia has a wonderful personality. In fact, she exhibited extreme collegiality during my summer program working with all sorts of characters. How good is she? She is low key, always does what she is supposed to, and often does it better than everybody. Yes, she is very good! Alicia is going to write an excellent dissertation, hold a postdoctoral position at a very good place and become a professor—possibly at a research university.

Alicia Urdapilleta is seriously committed to improving the conditions of the have nots, in particular the conditions of those who live in poverty. Her research and her decision to study applied mathematics are deeply rooted in her *personal* commitment to give back.

Her Ph.D. research is extremely likely to be impacted by a visit to South Africa—there is no better way to motivate socially conscious and committed individuals like Alicia than by putting them face to face with today's challenges today because of globalization and increasing poverty.

I give her my strongest recommendation.

Sincerely



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