



WESTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY

September 5, 1996

Dear Arts Fund Committee:

It is with great honor that I write about Dr. Irene S. Vasquez--a person that I have the utmost admiration and respect. I have known Dr. Vasquez as a colleague and friend. Throughout our acquaintance and friendship, I have been impressed with her intellect, critical awareness, and artistic ability to tackle issues that are quite conflictive, yet create avenues of communication on how to address them.

I have worked as an administrator in higher education for over twelve years. Yet, continue to feel the absence in both curriculum and faculty/teachers at both secondary and post secondary schools of ways to address young adults fears, understanding or lack of, and hopes about how an educational system can assist and not deter in having students succeed-- the key word is "individuals."

Oftentimes, educators continue to use the same learning models that theoretically speak about inclusivity, yet in practice are exclusive--failing to address the diversity, voice or individuality of each student. Dr. Vasquez is an exception. She is an educator that continuously finds new, creative ways or approaches that address the needs and values of different students. She is not about maintaining traditional methods to address young adults, but is proactive, creative and critical about discovering innovative ways to reach out to students. Moreover, what makes her different from many other educators is that it is a dialectic relationship that she seeks to attain where both learner and educator are involved in a thought-provoking process of confronting one's fears, anxieties, hopes, desires and fantasies.

I have had the opportunity to observe her talents and abilities while working with high school students that frequently visit our campus, and students are always impressed, not because of her entertainment abilities, but because she is thought provoking and demands that students think about what they feel, hear, think. She is simply magnificent!

Thank you for the opportunity to express feelings of an individual that has made an incredible impact our students! If you have any questions you can reach me at (616) 387-2009.

Sincerely,



Diane M. Ariza

Associate Director