



University of San Diego

School of Business Administration - Olin Hall

Office of the Dean

TO: Whom It May Concern

FROM: Curtis W. Cook, Dean and Professor of Management

SUBJECT: Recommendation of Jonathan B. Maher

DATE: June 30, 2005

Jonathan (Jon) Maher was the deepest thinker, most thoughtful and honestly outspoken, most enterprising student in the senior level class in Entrepreneurial Leadership that I team-taught during spring 2005. Of the thousands of students, graduate and undergraduate, I have taught over the past thirty-five years, Jon clearly ranks in the 98th percentile. He was an absolute delight as a student, and undoubtedly will prove himself as a socially-responsible, innovative, service-oriented servant leader in whatever future paths he chooses to pursue.

I recall with amusement and a sense of admiration one of Jon's remarks the first day of class. After we handed out the syllabus, Jon picked up a mixed message. He commented along the lines of: "I strongly disagree with your policy that any student who misses three classes will receive a failing grade. You wrote in the syllabus that leaders lead through influence not authority. What are your thoughts on that?" Provocative question! Jon spoke after class with each of us (faculty) independently, then the following class session he spoke up in front of a full classroom saying essentially, "I apologize for questioning your attendance policy, and hope you did not find it confrontational. Count on me being here every session." This was a learning moment for Mr. Maher, one that reflected the quickness of his mind combined with his ability to reflect and learn from other points of view. (And he had perfect attendance for all 28 sessions.)

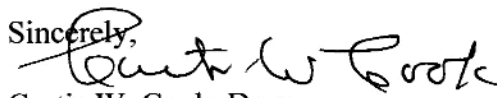
Throughout the class, Jon spoke up in every session, in a way that usually indicated his thoughts on the issue of the day as well as offering a reflective question to engage professors and students, often revealing his quick, dry wit in the process. His quest for learning and self-development of himself as well as his peers was continuously demonstrated both in class and out. Jon welcomed any opportunity to provide candid feedback. Even I was fair game! There was no guessing with him. He is very much the team player, and enjoys exerting influence in honest, non-threatening ways. One of our final student presentations emphasized the importance of feedback in developing leadership ability. In concluding their presentation, the group came up with one word to describe each person in the class. Jon was the only person in the class to receive the distinction of the word, "Honest."

Although initially a bit hesitant in making prepared presentations in front of the class, Jon ended the semester feeling very at ease. His final team presentation probed the leadership qualities of three accomplished individuals from different industries and parts of the world. Jon took the role of a chairman of a consulting firm who drilled his executive team (other students) in search of a new board member. He asked tough questions of his board members about their proposed candidates, questions such as: "Couldn't anyone with oil money do what the Sheik Mohammed has done in Dubai?" to "You said that Isadore Sharp is a micromanager. Do you really think any of our clients would want to learn how to become a micromanager?" His teammates had clearly been prepped for such questions, and the class was able to come to an almost unanimous decision on Sheik Mohammed as the best candidate. From my judgment as well as his peer evaluations, this approach had the deepest and most memorable impact on student learning of any presentation.

Jon is confident in his interpersonal interactions with anyone, and is especially at ease with executives and CEOs. We had Jon co-introduce several keynote speakers to audiences of about two hundred each as a linkage to the Leadership Institute for Entrepreneurs that my co-faculty member directs. During the introductions, Jon's co-introducer, the Graduate Business School's student president, asked for a round of applause for the guest she had just introduced. The crowd seemed apprehensive because Jon hadn't asked for applause for the guest speaker, Anne Donnellan our Provost, who he had just introduced. Jon jumped to the microphone and with enthusiasm announced, "Can I get a retroactive round of applause for Dr. Anne Donnellan." The audience was put at ease and responded with a room full of laughter and applause. It was just one of several of Jon's remarks that set an energizing tone for this early morning event.

Jon Maher is extremely goal directed, and has a definite series of objectives he plans to accomplish. Jon's unique leadership abilities most likely will take him into expanded entrepreneurial ventures. He hopes to become CEO of a global enterprise in order to bring jobs, healthcare and education to places around the world where they are needed most. I believe that Jon is certainly capable of such an achievement. Jon has already launched a services business in New York, with connections from Wall Street to Asia. He is comfortable with the world of finance and undoubtedly will extend his reach into this functional realm. Yet his entrepreneurial drive is not focused on personal enrichment as much as doing social good with his life and talents. Jon is also interested in a federal level political office and his candid diplomacy would serve him well in that capacity.

Jon demonstrates a well-defined, ethical values background than enables him to behave as a humble, principled leader. There is no doubt in my mind that Jon Maher will continually demonstrate significant accomplishments within any organization with which he is affiliated. Those who bring him into their organization will be proud of what he contributes. I enthusiastically recommend Jonathan Maher without any reservation.

Sincerely,

Curtis W. Cook, Dean
Professor of Management