

June 7, 2006

To the Astronaut Selection Board:

Dr. Matthew J. Geraci is a bold and innovative leader of character to whom I give my strong endorsement for admission to NASA's astronaut training program. Over the course of his doctoral studies at the University of Utah, I have come to know Matt as a passionate, creative individual whose desire to serve others is only overshadowed by his zest for life.

Matt came to the University of Utah with an impressive resume and background. Some of his more notable accomplishments include: achieving the Eagle Scout award, graduating from West Point, running triathlons, and commanding soldiers in two combat zones over the course of his exemplary military career. He has proven his ability to act prudently in stressful, life-threatening situations while accomplishing his missions safely. Where others might take time to rest and focus on studies during graduate schooling, Matt has built an exceptional resume and reputation as a leader, team player and a visionary at the University of Utah, all the while maintaining a stellar academic record in a world-class medical program.

Matt's innovativeness and vision have provided the University of Utah's College of Pharmacy with two new avenues in which to educate and provide students experiential training. As a student, Matt designed and developed two new clinical clerkship positions, which have proven successful and a useful programmatic addition for students and the corresponding clerkship sites. Matt, along with a fellow graduate student, designed and integrated clinical pharmacy consultation services into a local geriatric clinic. Matt provided consultation services to the doctors, staff and patients regarding drug therapy management.

Matt's most successful academic venture was integrating his clinical skills into the very busy and stressful environment at the University of Utah Hospital's Emergency Department. In conjunction with the Utah Poison Control Center and the Emergency Department Staff, Matt designed and executed a program that provided clinical pharmacy services to an area in Utah where none had been before. His ability to understand stressful situations and work as a member of a team allowed him to earn the respect of the staff and become a productive member of the emergency department. His clinical skills provided assistance to a multitude of trauma and emergency situations, and his desire to learn and teach made him a respected colleague. The culmination of his experience in the emergency department was the presentation of a seminar on "*Drug Interactions: Awareness and Avoidance in the Emergency Department.*" He was able to communicate complicated pharmacological issues to medical residents, attending physicians, and the department staff in a way which was lauded as easy to understand and enjoyable. Matt has since been asked to teach his class in other venues and the emergency department is also now requesting continuing clinical pharmacy services.

The greatest and potentially most long-lasting impact Matt has had on the University is his project, "*Operation Backyard.*" Matt successfully devised and executed a project in which his classmates joined in a service project to clean up a little-used, dilapidated courtyard outside of the College of Pharmacy. Matt

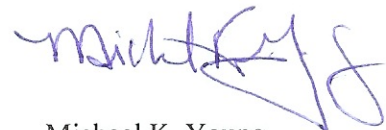
created the plan and he and his classmates provided the physical labor to clean the overgrown brick-paved courtyard. They then sold engravings on these bricks to alumni, faculty, students and friends. After the work, the courtyard was professionally rebuilt with the names of hundreds of alumni, faculty, students and friends of the University engraved into the bricks. The courtyard is an amazing site. The project involved students, faculty, and the local community, and is a source of great pride at the College of Pharmacy. It provides picnic tables at which students may study and relax and graduates, students and friends of the College often can be seen walking the courtyard looking for their names and the names of friends in the bricks.

This successful fundraising effort paid for all of the expenses of the project and more. The remainder of the funds was used to create an endowed scholarship fund called the *Class of 2006 Endowed Service Scholarship Fund*. No graduating class has ever endowed a scholarship prior to graduation; this is a first at the University of Utah! This endowment will provide scholarship money to students and will be a permanent gift. The fund will earn interest and continue to provide scholarship money to deserving students forever. The criteria Matt's class set for recipients of this scholarship include demonstrated service and leadership to the College, community and the nation.

As a testament to the impact Matt has made during his graduate studies, he was recognized at his graduation with multiple awards including the *Young Alumni Outstanding Graduating Senior Award* and the *TEVA Pharmaceuticals Outstanding Doctor of Pharmacy Student Award*. It is also the College of Pharmacy's desire that Matt takes on future pharmacy students and teach.

Matt's career at the University of Utah is one of success, service and vision. He is an individual who constantly seeks challenges and creative ways to improve himself and the world around him. It is with great pride and enthusiasm that I ask you to accept Dr. Matthew J. Geraci into the astronaut corps. He is a strong, intelligent, creative team player with a strong desire to continue to serve his community, country and world.

Sincerely yours,



Michael K. Young

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