

February 10, 2024

Dear Members of the Travel Grant Committee,

I am writing to wholeheartedly endorse Rachel Gundrum for the CSH travel grant to attend the Great Lakes Recreational Therapy Student Conference. As Rachel's professor and collaborator on their research project, I can attest to her contributions as the author and presenter the facility dog project at UWL that helped to establish the Dr. Wags program.

Rachel has demonstrated exceptional dedication and passion in her research on the utilization of facility dogs in recreational therapy settings. Through her attention to detail, they have supported the development of best practices to inform allied health professionals about the establishing facility dog programs and how to utilize facility dogs in recreational therapy practice. Their work not only meets but exceeds the standards expected at academic conferences and her presentation has already been accepted to the conference in April 2024.

The Great Lakes Recreational Therapy Student Conference provides an invaluable platform for emerging scholars like Rachel to showcase their research, engage in meaningful discussions with peers and professionals, and broaden their understanding of the field. This conference offers a unique opportunity for her to network with fellow students, faculty, and practitioners, fostering academic and professional growth.

I will also be attending the conference and speaking alongside Rachel to mentor and support her as this is **Rachel's first educational session at a professional conference**. The session will last 60 minutes and include a live demonstration with Rossi, the UWL facility dog. **Uniquely this will also be Rossi's first in-person conference session**. I am confident in her ability to represent our institution admirably and to effectively communicate the significance of her research findings. Rachel will have the full support of our department, as two additional faculty members will also be attending the conference.

In conclusion, I urge you to strongly consider Rachel's application for the travel grant. Their exemplary work, combined with the unique learning opportunities afforded by the conference, make their attendance not only beneficial to their academic and professional development but also to the broader community of recreational therapy. Please feel free to contact me if you require any further information or clarification regarding Rachel's application.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Tara DeLong, MS, CTRS, CHES
Associate Teaching Professor
RT Internship Coordinator
Department of Recreation Management and Recreational Therapy