



THE UNIVERSITY OF
TENNESSEE
KNOXVILLE

The Office of the Dean
The College of Architecture + Design
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October 6th, 2021

Victoria University of Wellington,
Graduate Admission Committee
Master of Design Innovation
Master of Interior Architecture

Dear Committee:

I am pleased to write to you to highly recommend Jessica Micallef, as an ideal candidate for the graduate programs in Design Innovation and Interior Architecture at Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand.

I had the privilege of having Jessica as a student in three opportunities. First as a freshman student in the Human and Environmental Behavior lecture, one as a sophomore in her first interior design studio, and last as a senior in her last design studio. As a freshman, Jessica stood out from a class of one hundred twenty students. She would be the most active student during the lectures and her work ranked in the top of the class.

During her tenure as a sophomore student, Jessica proved that she was committed to the best education she could have. What is fascinating about Jessica is that when she was out of her comfort zone, she worked hard to adapt to a new experience of teaching and learning. She took every advice she received in the most constructive way a student could do it. While for some students being the best in a design discipline can be something natural, for Jessica, becoming the best was the result of her hard-working ethics, desire to excel and her responsible approach to design. During her senior studio, Jessica and her team took on the challenge of working on the first design-build project with undergraduate students in interior design. Her team worked in collaboration with a Title I High School. Schools in the US receive this designation when 75% of the students qualify for free or reduced lunch. One of the best surprises I had during my eighteen years of teaching, was the result of this collaboration. Jessica and her team worked along side the youth in "Designing Hope", and in the process they realized that design could be a tool to develop agency and they shifted the scope of the project to amplify the voices of their collaborators, reinforcing the ethical value of design professions.

Through these courses, the lecture and the studios, I had the opportunity to experience her design skills and critical thinking mature. She has proven to be exceptional in several respects. First, Jessica is exceptionally intelligent, responsible and with self-critic. She is remarkably diligent and hard working and she very good at working with other people.

I also worked with Jessica in a teaching capacity. I had a budget to hire three students worker to help me provide feedback to the large lecture in Environmental Psychology. Even though this is a work usually for graduate students, I decided to invite Jessica to apply to the position when she was only a sophomore. Her maturity and nurture towards the younger students superseded my expectations.

I think that there is not better testament to express my support for Jessica to graduate school than the fact that I offered such a position to her when she has been in the program for only three semesters, and her performance exceeded expectations.

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It gives me a great pleasure to strongly recommend Jessica Micallef to the graduate programs in Design Innovation and in Interior Architecture. If you have any questions about this recommendation please do not hesitate to contact me by phone at 480-295-5991 or by email: mzingoni@utk.edu.

Milagros Zingoni

Associate Professor- Director School of Interior Architecture
Director of Diversity and Inclusion, College of Architecture and Design.

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