

Dear Committee Members,

We are writing to recommend Lourdes Gonzalez for emeritus status at Taft College, where she has served with distinction for 23 years. Throughout her career, Lourdes has demonstrated exceptional dedication to student success and program development, making lasting contributions to our college community.

Lourdes began her journey at Taft College in 2002 as a children's center eligibility technician, but her capabilities and master's degree in rehabilitation counseling quickly led to an expanded role as an adjunct counselor. In this capacity, she impacted struggling students and helped them overcome academic probation through targeted workshops and individualized guidance.

Her expertise in program management and student support has been instrumental in the success of multiple crucial initiatives. Since 2006, she has skillfully managed both EOPS/CARE and Project Gold grant programs, demonstrating remarkable ability in handling complex budgets and procedures while ensuring student success. Her leadership extended to the regional level, where she played a key role in developing and implementing the Summer Institute at the University of Santa Barbara, annually providing valuable networking and skill-building opportunities for Taft College students.

Lourdes's commitment to student development is further evidenced by her co-teaching of PSYC 41, which focused on peer mentoring and fostering student collaboration. As her responsibilities grew to include Cal-Works and NEXTUP programs, she continued to excel in coordinating services, managing multiple budgets, and creating valuable opportunities for students. Her particular talent for matching students with appropriate employment opportunities has helped countless individuals develop professional skills while supporting both campus and community employers.

One of Lourdes's most notable strengths has been her comprehensive understanding of both administrative requirements and student needs. She has masterfully balanced the complex regulations and reporting requirements of multiple programs while maintaining a deep commitment to addressing the personal and financial barriers faced by Taft College students. Her steady leadership has created an environment where both programs and staff can flourish, leading to innovative student events and support services.

Perhaps most telling of Lourdes's impact are the moments she considers her proudest: watching her students graduate, knowing intimately the challenges they've overcome and the hard work they've invested in their success. Her ability to combine program management expertise with genuine care for student success has made her an invaluable member of our college community.

For these reasons, we wholeheartedly recommend Lourdes Gonzalez for emeritus status. Her 23 years of service have been characterized by unwavering dedication to student success, exceptional program management, and a genuine commitment to creating opportunities for our students to explore and succeed.

Sincerely,



Janis Mendenhall
DSPS Coordinator/Counselor



Terri Smith
Librarian