

September 13, 2016

To whom it may concern,

I'm writing to offer myself as a reference for Professor Michal Marcotte and the New Mexico News Port project.

I was a journalism student at the University of New Mexico, where I wrote for the News Port and spent a semester working as an editor for the publication. During my time with the program, the theme was Albuquerque's startup and entrepreneurship scene. Four months after graduation, I'm a reporter at *Albuquerque Business First* covering, among other things, technology, startups and entrepreneurship. Someone once told me there's no such thing as coincidence.

The extensive editing process and high expectations at the News Port helped me develop into the kind of writer that can succeed professionally. My work with the News Port has also been the foundation of my source network at *Business First*.

I began working with *Albuquerque Business First* as an intern three days after graduation. I was told there was an open reporter position available, and coworkers hinted that, if I could pitch stories and write good pieces, it might be mine. Finding, pitching and writing your own stories is a daunting task for a young, unconnected journalist, but I'd been reporting on the business community for an entire year. The first article I pitched at *Business First*, came from a tip I received in an interview conducted for my final senior project, which was published on the News Port. It won me the "scoop of the week" that week and that source, and others, continue to be an important part of my network.

I only had the opportunities and tools needed to succeed because of my work with the News Port. I can unequivocally endorse this program, as it, and Professor Marcotte, deserve a large chunk of the credit when it comes to my successful transition from student to professional journalist

Feel free to contact me with any questions you may have.

Sincerely,

Marissa Higdon
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