January 22, 2018

Dear Hiring Manager,

I've been Heather Hyer's professor for several computer science classes. I demanded a lot of my students, and predictably, 20% got behind. Only 5% submitted projects early or did the extra credit challenge (because they are darn hard). Heather not only submitted early, and with the extra challenge, but the quality of her work is high. There were times when I went over her code in person. I couldn't find anything major to correct, but the suggestions for minor improvements were accepted graciously.

It was during these one-on-one sessions that I learned about a strength and weakness Heather has. She is soft spoken and demuring. This is a strength because she doesn't put the other person on the defensive; she's not a threat. It allows her to underpromise and overdeliver. It's also a weakness because before I knew her well, I wouldn't have selected her for tough assignments in a work environment. Underestimating Heather is a mistake her new manager and new team are likely to make.

Heather is not to be underestimated. She approached me in the data structures class to do an honors version for her. I had never done an honors version, so she coached me through the program. I gave her two major projects that went well beyond the normal course. I frankly admitted I had never done the projects myself, so she was on her own to research and complete them. She came back two weeks later to explain why one of the projects had a technical conflict with itself. I had set her up to fail. She was calm and sweet about negotiating an alternative project.

Before starting my second career teaching at UVU, I worked in the field as a software engineer for 25 years, and concurrently as a manager for the last 8 years. I probably wouldn't have hired her because *I* wouldn't have seen her strength. It would have been a big mistake. She would have been a strength to my team--any team.

David Wagstaff Lecturer
Computer Science Dept.
david.wagstaff@uvu.edu