

September 16<sup>th</sup>, 2012

Dear Generous Members of the Bethel Education Scholarship Team,

I am writing to thank you for the \$500 Jordan Reifel Sr. scholarship I received from you in 2009 to go towards my college education. I am thrilled and proud to inform you that just three years later, I received my Bachelor's Degree from Whitman College on May 20<sup>th</sup>, 2012, making me the first person in my family to attain a college degree! Throughout my time at Whitman I was exposed to hundreds of new opportunities including working for a drug and alcohol recovery community, becoming head of Sorority Recruitment, serving in the student Senate, tutoring 20 hour weeks at a local high school, and participating in organizations such as the Christian fellowship on campus, flag football, ultimate frisbee, and dance performances every semester. My college experience was enlightening, demanding, and transformational. I was constantly expected to take an active role in all aspects of my life. Passivity was not an option. I now bring that same approach to life in my post-college decisions and opportunities.

I am currently working in Dallas, Texas, for Teach For America—a highly selective non-profit that puts recent college graduates in low-income schools in an effort to close the achievement gap that exists between the children from high income backgrounds and the children from low-income backgrounds in our country. My commitment in Dallas is a minimum of two years, but many teachers in this program stay for longer. The vision of Teach For America is that "one day, all children in this nation will have the opportunity to attain an excellent education." I would not have been able to join such a movement had I not received an education at a school that was committed to developing me not only as a scholar, but also as a leader with character and compassion.

There are many educational paths I am considering for the future: Educational Leadership, School Counseling, Urban Planning, and Low-income Health Services. I may pursue advancing my education during my commitment to Teach For America or shortly thereafter. In the near future I also intend to living abroad for at least a year. I believe being immersed in another culture will bring a wealth of perspective that cannot be learned from a textbook. In the long-term, I see myself working for a non-profit that strives for equal access to excellent public education and/or health services.

Your investment in my potential helped me get to where I am today. I plan to invest in my students the same way as you did in me through my teaching, truly believing that educational inequity is the civil rights movement of our time. All students, regardless of their socioeconomic status, deserve an excellent education. Thank you once again for your commitment to making higher education a reality for students from low-income backgrounds; it has surely not gone unnoticed.

Thank you for your investment in me,

*Autumn Krutson*  
Whitman College '09-'12  
Teach For America '12