

January 26, 2023

Dear Committee,

I am pleased to submit this letter of recommendation on behalf of James Juma for the Master's in Entrepreneurship program at your school. I have known James this quarter while teaching him in a class on Entrepreneurship and Technology. James is an intelligent, vibrant and visionary student. In this hands-on class where we train students to explore entrepreneurial ventures under the mentorship of alumni or other corporate leaders, James has demonstrated superlative collegiality in his team project. He is clearly one of the top students in the class and has been a pleasure to have in the classroom.

His team started off with exploring the designing of a traffic mitigation system which would apply machine learning to offer users suggestions of potential leaving times to beat the traffic. James' team was among the top of the class, scoring almost the highest grade in their Opportunity Analysis Project presentation. Towards the end of the quarter, I learned of their pivot to a completely new idea upon their re-evaluation of their market size and complexity in execution of the first idea. James and his team, however, punched above their weight when they shifted to designing a wealth management system that offered robo-advising to help startups invest their seed money for a period before the startups decide on how to spend it on the actual idea. This experience demonstrates that James has a growth mindset and is adaptable in the event of obstacles along his path, a quality that I am persuaded will serve him well in his graduate studies and beyond.

James' contribution and commitment to public service led him to being awarded a Cardinal Service notation on his Stanford academic transcript. This is an honor given to students who have participated in substantial service programs while at Stanford. He was awarded this honour after completing a research project as a research assistant to my colleagues Professors Pascaline Dupas and Marcel Fafchamps. The field research was on analyzing the socio-economic impacts of urbanization in Ivory Coast. James has continued to demonstrate his intellectual curiosity through his varied research projects. Though he is majoring in the interdisciplinary Management Science and Engineering program, he has also served as a research assistant to Dr. William Tarpeh, my colleague in Chemical Engineering. Under Dr. Tarpeh's lab, James explored the conversion of fecal sludge into fertilizers and disinfectants. This past summer, he worked on deriving human population from analysis of ammonia concentrations in wastewater. I am therefore persuaded that James' undergraduate experience has adequately equipped him for the PhD program at your school.

Besides his excellent intellectual capabilities, James stood out to me as a visionary individual deeply committed to serving his community back in Kenya and expanding into other developing

nations. He told me of his conviction to use his education to participate in the fight against poverty. He intends to return to Kenya upon completion of his graduate studies and given his training, he shall serve his country through policy making and as an advisor to the government. He also has a vision of not only establishing his own non-profit Foundation for the course of poverty eradication, but also offering training particularly to the youth on entrepreneurship to jointly combat the high levels of unemployment among the youth in Kenya. In addition, James is dedicated to using his academic background to contribute towards mitigating post-election violence, which he himself has lived through having been rendered a refugee in his own country following the aftermath of the 2007 general elections.

Getting to know James outside of the classroom via office hours and a dinner with other students, I can see that James is a selfless individual. He sees any opportunity that comes his way as a blessing and an occasion to use it in serving others. While studying in Switzerland, James volunteered to teach French to the asylum seekers at La Clairiere Centre in Villars-sur-Ollon to help them integrate smoothly into the community. Additionally, he volunteered at La Castalie, in Monthey, which is the world's largest Medico-Education Centre for children or adults with intellectual disabilities or multiple disabilities. While at Stanford, he went on a mission trip with his church in 2018 to support the victims of the devastating forest fires in Chico, Paradise, California.

Overall, James led a terrific team and I felt like he took a leadership role within the group given his professional experience and natural leadership capability. With his combination of leadership, research skills, and teaching interest/ability, I offer my strongest recommendation for James. I am happy to answer any additional questions. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,  
Charles Eesley



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