

April 8, 2017

Dear Hiring Committee,

I first met Suree Towfighnia in the fall semester of 2013 at Columbia College Chicago. Haskell Wexler was screening his documentary *Four Days in Chicago*. After the screening, I approached Suree, who had worked with Mr. Wexler on the film and expressed my interest in working with her in some capacity. I loved what Suree was doing with giving marginalized groups of people platform for their voices with her powerful storytelling. Much to my fortune I was able to intern for Suree when she was in the final stages of completing her documentary *Crying Earth Rise Up*. I interned for Suree with her company Prairie Dust Films that spring semester and throughout the summer.

Suree Towfighnia is one of the most inspiring, thought provoking and engaging teachers I've had in my college career. I learned a number of things about documentary filmmaking, like fund raising, editing, and transcription. I also gained useful general accounting skills. Suree would ask my opinions about the film during editing sessions and would take them into consideration. This was very rewarding and made me feel accepted and appreciated.

In the time I spent with Suree, she really took me under her wing as her mentee. She was patient, kind and understanding when I made mistakes and she seemed to have a solution to every problem. Suree is a true problem solver; I really admired how she worked under stress. Additionally, I loved how Suree would set aside time during the day to answer any questions I had about filmmaking, my career or life in general, she really cared. I have yet to have another pleasurable learning experience on the same level.

In school, we were often asked to write or talk about what kind of filmmaker we wanted to be. Working under Suree for the time I did really put things into perspective for me, because of her I uncovered the desire to tell stories that reach the masses, stories that reflect and give insight to the human condition. I want to make films that inspire and change lives like Suree does. Suree will forever be a mentor for me thus, it goes without saying; I am confident in Suree's ability to teach.

Thank you for your consideration,

Cari Smith