



July 25th, 2005

To whom it may concern,

The Center for Urban School Improvement is an organization of approximately 75 people, which focuses on three things: developing people for urban schools; embarking on research and development to improve teaching and learning and affect the social practices within schools; and creating exemplary schools – in the form of University sponsored charter schools across the south side of Chicago.

This year David Campt worked with the Center for Urban School Improvement (USI) to investigate how issues of race, class and culture affect our workplace and the intersection of these issues with our professional responsibilities as leaders, researchers and practitioners. His work spanned six months, and involved intensive work with the USI management team, a small working group of faculty and staff, focus groups, one on one interviews, an organization wide survey and the development of several reports on findings as well as recommendations to senior leaders regarding next steps.

I have been engaged in many examinations of these issues in a range of contexts – in school settings, in a large, urban district office, in non-profits, and working with private sector firms. In all cases the work has been challenging and complex.

David's work with USI was, without a doubt, the most powerful, constructive and insightful I have experienced. He does not shirk from the most difficult terrain, but consistently tackles it in ways that opens minds and creates solutions. David builds trust quickly, he organizes process in ways that ensures people are direct but not divisive, he surfaces and addresses the hardest subject matter with grace and diplomacy, and most importantly he gets people and organizations to next steps – which are concrete, achievable, and create momentum. This combination of skills are all, in my experience, exceptionally rare.

In short, I could not recommend David with more confidence.

Sincerely,

Timothy Knowles
Executive Director
Center for Urban School Improvement