



October 12, 2022

Fundación Intellectus
#1440 Salud (Edificio Tamar)
Oficina 1-A Ponce PR 00733

Dear committee of “Fundación Intellectus”:

It is with great enthusiasm that I write this recommendation letter on behalf of **Erik Velez-Pérez** who is applying to your 2022 “Beca en Investigación en Salud”.

I first met Erik in June 2021 when he applied for a summer rotation in my research lab. I was positively impressed by Erik’s work and commitment during the summer. He integrated very well with the other research assistants and members of the research team. He always came prepared to engage in critical discussions about the topics that were being discussed. He was eager to learn and do more of what was requested of him, showing initiative and motivation. After Erik completed his summer work he voluntarily decided to continue working with the team, participating in meetings, data analysis, preparation of abstracts and development of manuscripts for peer-reviewed publications, including one as a first author.

As a medical student Erik has excelled in his interest and commitment to research which is not typical for most medical students due to the demands of the degree. In terms of research experience, Erik has worked on two NIH funded research projects with made vulnerable populations including Latinx trans and non-binary individuals and people with serious mental illness. He has developed research skills including data collection using software programs and data analysis using both quantitative and qualitative methods. Moreover, Erik has demonstrated a marked interest in the intersection of mental health and public health, among gender and sexual minorities. That is why he has looked for research opportunities under this line of research at my lab. Erik has presented his work in national and international conferences, including the 2022 Psychology and Related Fields International Conference in Portugal. I also had the opportunity of observing Erik presenting on scientific conferences and can attest to his ability to explain complex topics in an understandable manner and to demonstrate outstanding interpersonal and oral communication skills.

During the time I have known Erik, he has demonstrated that he possesses the characteristics needed to impact others as an investigator and future health professional in Medicine and Public Health. I can attest Erik is and will continue contributing to health prevention and healthcare among Puerto Ricans. He has the drive and commitment needed to become an agent of change in society throughout his career. Nowadays - as an investigator in my lab - he is looking for sponsors and funding for his research proposal: “Ansiedad, satisfacción y modificaciones sugeridas en relación al Currículo de Medicina para Ciencias Básicas en PHSU”. I am confident that Erik will make an excellent fit to your scholarship and will use funding to conduct research that will positively impact Puerto Rican medical students’ education and health. If you have any further questions, feel free to contact me at aliramos@psm.edu.

Sincerely,

Alixida Ramos-Pibernus, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor
School of Behavioral and Brain Sciences
Ponce Health Sciences University