

26 April 2024

To Whom It May Concern,

I met Arizbey Reyes Soriano in Spring 2023, upon her enrollment in my *History of Corrections* class which I regularly teach at John Jay College of Criminal Justice in New York City. During a routine day of instruction, my class was interested in discussing my career as a Supervisory Special Agent (SSA) with the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), prior to my becoming an Adjunct Instructor. Subsequently, we had a robust conversation about Criminal Justice careers. It was during this discussion that I asked my students about their individual aspirations. As you can imagine, all the students who are enrolled in any of my classes, hold a special place in my heart but, Arizbey stood out! She initially seemed quiet. However, she quickly changed my mind as she participated in class and showed how she is able to convincingly convey her thoughts on any matter. Arizbey was attentive during class and has an uncanny ability to be obviously pensive yet completely engaged at the same time.

There is no doubt, Arizbey is an astute young lady whom, I imagine, like most, would prefer to let her assignments alone speak for her (and they did). Yet, she was always willing to participate when a topic moved her enough to verbally convey her opinion. From the semester we met until now, Arizbey has shown me she is a respectful, hardworking student, traits she gets directly from her mother who has been a continuous example of determination and kindness in her life. Arizbey strives to be at the top of her class. To that end, she was definitely one of my best. In fact, she earned an A in my class. Arizbey is a conscientious, wise and compassionate student who is clearly intrigued by the criminal justice system, both by its challenges and its championships. Her impression of the criminal justice system is real, raw and even intuitive for her age. Since being in my class, Arizbey expressed that upon her undergraduate graduation from John Jay with a degree in Forensic Psychology, she is interested in furthering her education to become a social worker. I believe, if she was accepted into a BS/MA program, she might like to hone her criminal justice as well as her public service/social worker skills. Arizbey mentioned, her desire to be a social worker and serve correctional facilities. Arizbey indicated she does not believe that jails and prisons are the only way to rehabilitate offenders nor does she believe, everyone in jail or prison should be there. Arizbey believes her life experiences have shaped her in deciding on a career based in criminal justice reform. She personally witnessed how her loved ones succumbed to alcohol and cocaine use. She credits this heartbreaking experience with giving her the compassion which drives her need to help others, as she was unable to help her family members. This is the reason for her interest in all things surrounding legal (justice) studies where she will draw her focus.

I, for one, would welcome having someone like Arizbey in my corner, as my advocate. Arizbey would certainly be an absolute asset to our criminal justice overall, no matter in which capacity she serves. She sees the world differently merely because of what she has seen.

In the short time I've known her, I have noticed, Arizbey has a genuinely caring spirit and an interest in people and their welfare. This attribute is clearly her driving force and showcases her intrinsic "caretaking" spirit. She seems to ascribe to a standard of grit unlike many. I believe if Arizbey sees something she wants; she goes for it with a cool confidence. This same standard seems to have served her well in her undergraduate studies at John Jay and will undoubtedly do the same for her graduate studies. For all of the aforementioned reasons and Arizbey's resolve to advance our next generation, through her own endeavors and her zeal for life, these not only make her an exceptional candidate for the 2024-2025 Graduate School, these same characteristics make her the ONLY viable candidate!

Sincerely,

Joanne M. Payne