

13 January 2015

To whom it may Concern:

I am pleased to write this reference for Sudha Govindswamy (Sunder), Curriculum and Staff Development Coordinator at UAS (secondary 7-12), who has been an exceptionally devoted and capable member of the faculty of the Universal American School (UAS) in Dubai, a tenure that has spanned eight years and is coming to a close in June, 2015. Sudha has decided to embark on a new chapter in her professional life, initially entailing the finishing work on her PH.D. with Bath University (UK) but with full readiness to commence a new career in which she will maintain her close links with the international education community.

Sudha's tenure at UAS has been one of extraordinary professional growth, to the point that within my tenure from 2009 until my retirement in 2013 Sudha took on numerous curriculum and ICT leadership tasks with both skill and passion. In my career as international school head that spanned well over 30 years I have seen few individuals progressing with such rapidity and engagement. Sudha has taught with great success several ICT courses across all upper level grades and the IB course Information Technology in a Global Society (ITGS). She is a teacher of great talent, depth, and meticulous preparation. Students and colleagues alike admire Sudha for her engaged teaching and the manner and style she brings even to the most difficult tasks. Importantly, beyond teaching Sudha has taken on significant additional responsibilities which, over the course of several years, have developed into leadership tasks beyond technology into all aspects of curriculum and its implementation in teaching and learning. Along with this Sudha has willingly, and with great skill and devotion to the good of the school, has played leading roles in accreditations for MSA, CIS, and IB while also reaching out to align the US Common Core with the conceptual curriculum in grades 7-10 and indeed across the full K-12 curriculum. The annual inspection of the Dubai Education authorities, the KHDA, could not have had the success it did over the years without Sudha's engaged leadership. Finally, Sudha has played a major role in supporting the professional development of colleagues in the integration of technology into teaching and learning and in shaping teaching for conceptual understanding. Sudha brought all of her knowledge and understanding in ICT and curriculum into her roles as Chair of the school-wide Curriculum Committee and her membership in the Steering Committee.

Sudha stands out in her work ethic, her devotion to teamwork, and her breadth of knowledge. In all that she does Sudha is invariably well prepared, whether this entails meetings, workshops, parent conferences, or the support of major events. She will seek advice where this is appropriate and share her skills and insights in ways that is valued by colleagues and students alike. She takes on even the most challenging tasks with both resolve and good humor, attributes which she brings to all aspects of school life.

The qualifications which Sudha has obtained, including the nearly completed doctorate, all recommend her well for a new career which will likely involve a broadening of her work in workshop presentations, conferences, and institutes. Most recently Sudha has been asked to contribute to IB curriculum review by the IB Americas Global Center in Bethesda while her EdD. dissertation will provide greater understanding of teacher perceptions of the concept-based curriculum and how to engage in best practices. I know from my talks with Sudha that her work is a systematic. Research-based investigation into the complexities of teaching for conceptual understanding. Returning to the use of technology, at UAS Sudha has started the I-Tunes U Master Class Project, again evidence of her commitment to providing students with digital thinking capacities. Additionally, as regards qualifications, Sudha is certified by the Erickson Institute in the conceptual curriculum, she is an IB Examiner in the ITGS, and she single-handedly made UAS a SMART certified school while becoming an "Exemplary Smart Educator" herself. She holds a Teaching degree from the University of Sunderland (UK), an international diploma in computer programming, and - if this would not suffice - all the practical understandings that surely an M.A. in Business Studies and Accountancy will bring to the table.

Sudha is well positioned to cast her net of activities more broadly, having given numerous workshops at UAS, in several schools in the Emirates, and at conferences and institutes covering curriculum and ICT. The core of her commitment is to be a change agent, helping to transform traditional practice into "thinking classrooms". In fact, I would go further and say that Sudha's work is dedicated to finding meaningful ways to enhance the quality of student learning. I am confident that in this modern challenge Sudha can play a leading role, in schools as well as in the wider circles of the professional development community.

Sincerely and with all good wishes,



Dr. Gunther Brandt
UAS Director, 2009-2013
ESOL EDUCATION Advisor and Board Member