



August 21, 2020

Subject: Letter of Support for Professor Robert Ashford and his Work on Inclusive Capitalism

To Whom It May Concern:

I write to share my experience with Professor Ashford, regarding the important contribution he has made to the Renée Crown University Honors Program. Professor Ashford teaches the honors seminar, *Inclusive Capitalism and Democracy*, which presents principles that explain (1) how capitalist economies can be reformed to produce and distribute greater and more broadly shared sustainable prosperity by way of voluntary transactions, without redistribution, taxation, and inflation and (2) how his reformation of capitalism is essential to the maintenance of a robust, participatory democracy. Students consistently provide enthusiastic support for his seminar in course evaluations.

Professor Ashford cogently advances a paradigmatic shift in thinking of capitalist economic arrangements – one that provides a transformative perspective that challenges widely-taught traditional approaches to understanding economic systems. His teaching enables students to critically examine widely-shared, implicit economic assumptions embedded in mainstream discourse that have shaped their own ideas, values and ethics regarding economic equity and human dignity.

Professor Ashford has also contributed to the Honors Program's academic enhancement by being the guest speaker at a series of lectures in which he further expounded on the ideas of inclusive capitalism and its relationships with justice and democracy. In my view, more than a single lecture or conversation is required to engage with these ideas. Enhanced understanding of these concepts requires ongoing conversations, lectures and class presentations, with ample opportunities for students to reflect on the ideas and to present their questions. Professor Ashford has provided these opportunities through his seminars and lecture series. In dialogue with Professor Ashford, students gain an appreciation of the unusual importance of this approach to inclusive capitalism based on binary economics.

In a contemporary era of extreme and widening wealth gaps globally, and increasing political divisiveness based on race, ethnicity, gender, religion, class, and other social characteristics, his work on inclusive capitalism is profoundly relevant for our times. I believe that the teaching of Professor Ashford's approach to a more inclusive capitalism should not be limited to Syracuse University honors students, and I recommend and would actively support its inclusion in other academic programs at Syracuse University and elsewhere.

Based on my experience in learning from Professor Ashford, I hasten to add that this inclusion would help not only students but also teachers to achieve a much deeper understanding of the dynamics of capitalist economies and how they can be beneficially reformed to be more inclusive.

Professor Ashford's dedicated service to the Honors Program and his scholarly distinction are especially important, substantive contributions to fulfillment of the mission of Syracuse University with regard to intellectual versatility and ethic of inclusion. Please do not hesitate to contact me if I can provide further information regarding Professor Ashford's work and contributions to the Honors Program and to students at Syracuse University, and its broader significance for an outstanding undergraduate education, on a national and global scale.

Thank you for your consideration and all the best wishes.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Danielle Taana Smith". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Dr. Danielle Taana Smith  
Professor, Department of African American Studies  
Director, Renée Crown University Honors Program  
Syracuse University

Cc: Robert Ashford, Professor of Law