

#### Application Related Information

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Application: Application Incomplete  
Grad Program Applying To: MES

Iteration Name: 202410\_GR\_G  
Program Name: MES

#### Recommendation Information

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Recommended By: Kevin Maier  
Recommenders Institution: University of Alaska  
Southeast

Recommenders Title: Professor of English  
Contact Name: Rayne Billings

Waive Access to Recommendation Ltrs: I choose to waive my right to review this recommendation.

Recommendation Waiver Choice:

Recommendation Form Submitted: ✓

Recommendation Status: Received

Received Date: 01/26/2023 01:32 PM

Recommender Assessment: I recommend this applicant without reservation.

Recommendation Type: General

Recommender Form: Letter of Recommendation

Recommendation Entity ID: 1024000108979641

Recommendation Owner: Josephine Bernier

#### Recommender Form Questions

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How long have you known applicant:

Applicant ability as self-directed learner:

Time since last contact with applicant:

Applicant as productive member of group:

Relationship with Applicant:

Applicant most significant strengths:

Ability to complete rigorous grad program:

Responsibility/reliability:

Communication Skills - Oral:

Communication skills - written:

Service Orientation-sensitivity/empathy:

Ability to work independently:

Ability to handle stress:

Ability to think critically:

Ability to analyze/problem solve:

Ability to think creatively:

Openness to feedback:

Potential for leadership:

Ability to work in a team:

Personal/professional reflection:

#### Description Information

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Description:

Form URL: <https://evergreenstatecollege.radiu>

#### Other Information

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Created Time: 01/22/2023 03:09 PM

Created By: Josephine Bernier

Modified Time: 01/26/2023 01:32 PM

Modified By: Josephine Bernier

1 December 2022

Dear Graduate Admissions Committee,

It is my pleasure to write a letter in support of Rayne Billing's application to your graduate program in environmental studies. I first met Rayne in fall of 2019 when we sat down to discuss pursuing an independent design bachelor's degree. Since that initial meeting, Rayne has completed my interdisciplinary 400-level seminar on twentieth century literature called *Driving Toward the Anthropocene*, as well as a pair of directed research courses focusing on Animal studies and whales. We've met regularly outside of class to design and fine-tune an exciting environmental humanities degree, to hash out details on proposals for a pair of Undergraduate Research and Creative Activity grants, and to chat about the rapidly evolving state of higher education. We co-presented at a well-attended campus symposium along with other members of the University's Sustainability Committee. Most recently, our near-weekly meetings have shifted to focus on Rayne's ambitious thesis project, which is already shaping up to be one of the most well researched and genuinely original projects I've been involved with in two decades in higher education.

In each of these contexts, Rayne has proven to be not just an outstanding student and a critical and quick thinker, but a model citizen of the university. Simply put, Rayne is motivated, inquisitive, and personable. Thinking clearly, critically, and broadly, Rayne reads voraciously and writes clearly. In short, I think Rayne is exactly the type of student who will not only benefit personally from graduate study, but who will also raise the bar and bring other students up to higher intellectual and commitment levels.

I could cite several examples to substantiate these claims, but I'll offer two representative stories. First, following a long discussion about graduate programs, I off-handedly recommended a book written by a colleague with an approach similar to the interdisciplinary methodology Rayne was gravitating toward (Nicole Seymour's 2018 *Bad Environmentalism: Irony and Irreverence in the Ecological Era*). Even though there was a 300-page novel to read for my class the following week, to my utter shock, Rayne managed to also read most of the densely theoretical 200-page book over the same time frame, and came to my office with a new set of questions and ideas, and a new outlook. Second: when I pointed out that there is a wide array of conferences exploring human-animal relations from humanities perspectives, Rayne went out and found CFPs, followed up with questions, and successfully submitted an abstract to present at not one but two international conferences. There are countless other examples I could cite, but these seem instructive, as they show a degree of ambition, engagement, and self-motivation rarely seen in today's undergraduates, and they strike me as characteristics that will serve a student well in your graduate program.

To conclude, Rayne stands out as one of the very best undergraduate students I have worked with in more than twenty years in higher education; I'm confident Rayne will no doubt excel in graduate school and beyond. I would welcome the opportunity to talk about Rayne's application further; please don't hesitate to contact me at [kkmaier@alaska.edu](mailto:kkmaier@alaska.edu).

Sincerely,

Kevin Maier, PhD  
Professor of English  
Director, Program on the Environment