

# The Evergreen State College

Olympia, Washington

USA 98505



MES Admissions Committee  
c/o Office of Admissions  
The Evergreen State College

10 July 2023

Dear Admissions Committee:

This is a letter of recommendation for **Fauna Engstrom**. Fauna was a student in my program 'Marine Biodiversity' during this past Winter-Spring of 2023. Fauna is smart and very hard-working. She improved her ability to write in a clear direct style, and her work at the end of spring quarter was very well accomplished. Her final research paper was the best in the class. She also had top scores on exams and quizzes. Fauna did great work in 'Marine Biodiversity', and she demonstrated clearly her ability to carry out independent research.

In Marine Biodiversity, Fauna worked with another student to develop a research proposal to examine the prevalence of parasites in ghost shrimp, *Neotrypaea californiensis*, on the Evergreen Beach. Their proposal was thorough, included a strong bibliography, and represented a good start to this research project. During the proposal review session at the end of winter quarter, Fauna presented good constructive critique of her fellow students' proposals. Fauna did an excellent job of carrying out this project during spring quarter. The research team examined 45 specimens, finding that 31 of them were infested with the parasitic copepod *Clausidium vancouverensis*. They found a relationship between size and prevalence, and examined gills using light microscopy and SEM. They found no sign of damage by these copepods and concluded that *C. vancouverensis* is commensal rather than parasitic. Their final poster did a very good job of explaining their project, and Fauna was able to answer questions about the project in a very professional manner during the poster session at the end of spring quarter. Both her poster and final paper contained great images from light microscopy and SEM. Her final paper was a fantastic start at scientific writing.

Fauna collaborates very well with others, and all of her interactions with other students and faculty have been professional. She is a leader and she has demonstrated that she benefits from constructive critique. I think that Fauna would be a great fit for the MES program. She knows how to conduct primary research, and she writes very well thus allowing her to complete her thesis without excess difficulty. Please consider her application favorably, and do not hesitate to contact me if needed.

Sincerely yours,

Erik V. Thuesen, Ph.D.  
Member of the Faculty, Zoology