

Application Related Information

Application: Application Verified
Grad Program Applying To: MES

Iteration Name: 202510_GR_G
Program Name: MES

Recommendation Information

Recommended By: Margot Singer
Recommenders Institution: Denison University
Waive Access to Recommendation Ltrs: I choose to waive my right to review this recommendation.
Recommendation Form Submitted: ✓

Recommenders Title: Author, Professor of English
Contact Name: Samuele Forti
Recommendation Waiver Choice:
Recommendation Status: Received

Received Date: 03/09/2024 11:13 AM
Recommendation Type: General
Recommendation Entity ID: 1024000117761591

Recommender Assessment: I recommend this applicant without reservation.
Recommender Form: Letter of Recommendation
Recommendation Owner: Josephine Bernier

Recommender Form Questions

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

Description:

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

Other Information

Created Time: 02/21/2024 04:28 PM
Modified Time: 03/09/2024 11:13 AM

Created By: Josephine Bernier
Modified By: Josephine Bernier

March 9, 2024

Dear colleagues,

I am delighted to submit this letter of recommendation for **Sam Forti** in his application to the **Masters of Environmental Studies** at Evergreen State College. I know Sam very well. He was a student in the advanced creative writing workshop that I taught in the Fall of 2009 and a member of the small group of senior English-Creative Writing majors whose capstone projects I supervised during the 2010-11 academic year. He was also my academic advisee. Sam is a talented writer, an intrepid outdoorsman, and a keen student of the natural world. He has spent the last decade leading outdoor and experiential education programs in the US and around the world. There is nobody I would recommend more highly to your program.

I had the pleasure of working closely with Sam on his capstone senior writing project. The required course is taught in a combination of small group workshops and individual tutorials and spans a full academic year. Sam's project was a book-length (~150 page) collection of linked short stories and flash fiction that explored the intersections of nature and humanity, tracking the wild desires and the longing for transcendence that hide within the human heart. Loosely linked by character (Bo) and place (Nelsonville, Ohio), the stories trace the contrasts between the experience of the city and the wilderness, the strangeness of desire, and the struggle to be free. The flash fictions, interspersed like drawings in a sketchbook, provided a lyrical counterpoint to the longer stories' themes—the strangeness of people and their dreams, the mystical beauty and power of the natural world.

It was great pleasure to watch Sam's work grow and evolve over the course of his senior year. I was struck by the strength of the language and imagery. In these stories, the atmosphere and setting not only reflect the characters' emotion, they *evoke* it, for example, in the way a jazz singer's music synaesthetically draws out a young man's memories of nearly drowning in the quaking bog, or in the way a woman's memories of a beloved Chinquapin oak felled in a violent storm free her repressed feelings for a lost lover and clear the way for her own "escape."

Most of all, I was impressed by Sam's approach to the writing process and by the growth he exhibited over the course of his college years. He worked and reworked his material, experimenting with structure, allowing his stories to develop and evolve. Exploring both fabulist and realistic modes of fiction, he demonstrated skill across a diverse array of narrative forms. Where many students struggle to stay on track with a senior project of this scope, Sam maintained a productive pace and positive attitude throughout the process, requiring no prodding or oversight from me. His seriousness of purpose and enthusiasm for the hard work of writing and revision set the tone for the all the students in the group.

As a person, Sam has a unique combination of resilience, common sense, and pluck. He first got turned on to wilderness survival and tracking after spending several summers at the Coyote Trails School of Nature in Medford, Oregon, where he learned (as he put it) "the art and science of tracking, flint knapping, medicinal and edible plant use, bird language, wooden bow making, trapping, journaling, mapping, naturalist studies, and more." At Denison, Sam chose to live for three

years at the Homestead, a unique student-run intentional community with a focus on ecological sustainability. Homesteaders live in cabins heated by wood stoves with limited cold running water and solar power. They share chores, including cooking vegan meals, chopping wood, and gardening, and maintenance, and during Sam's time helped build a straw-bale cabin and indoor greenhouse. Sam also spent a semester on a study abroad program in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia, where he lived with nomadic herding communities and researched camel herding strategies and folklore. Sam is intrepid but never foolhardy. He is adaptable, reliable, and laid back. All in all, he is one of the nicest and most grounded students I've ever met.

Since college, Sam has led high school and college-age students on educational adventures with a focus on environmental and social issues, outdoor skills, cultural exchange, and personal growth. After several years leading experiential education, gap year and behavioral health programs in Costa Rica, Tanzania, Thailand, and China, he is currently working as the Community Services Program Coordinator for the North Bellevue Community Center, providing a range of services, mostly to seniors. He is now looking to move into a career in science communications and natural resource management.

I couldn't be more pleased that Sam is taking this step now to return to graduate school in a program that will help him integrate his skills and experiences and step up to a higher-level career, which he is eminently capable of. You will be very lucky to have him in your program.

Warmly,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Margot Singer". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Margot" being more prominent than the last name "Singer".

Dr. Margot Singer
Professor of English and Creative Writing
Director of Creative Writing
Director of Strategy for the Arts
www.margot-singer.com