

#### Application Related Information

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Application:	Application Verified	Iteration Name:	202510_GR_G
Grad Program Applying To:	MES	Program Name:	MES

#### Recommendation Information

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Recommended By:	John Strait	Recommenders Title:	Dr
Recommenders Institution:	Sam Houston State University	Contact Name:	Sophia Gump
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:	11/26/2023 11:21 AM	Recommender Assessment:	I recommend this applicant without reservation.
Recommendation Type:	General	Recommender Form:	Letter of Recommendation
Recommendation Entity ID:	1024000112252227	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:	<a href="https://evergreenstatecollege.radius">https://evergreenstatecollege.radius</a>
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#### Other Information

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Created Time:	11/15/2023 01:05 PM	Created By:	Josephine Bernier
Modified Time:	11/26/2023 11:21 AM	Modified By:	Josephine Bernier

November 23, 2023

Averi Azar, MES  
Assistant Director  
Master of Environmental Studies Program

Dear Averi Azar,

The intent of this letter is to provide a reference for Sophia Gump, a student advisee of mine who recently applied to the Master of Environmental Studies program at your institution. I serve as both the Assistant Chair of the Department of Environmental & Geosciences and the Geography Program Coordinator at Sam Houston State University (SHSU). While I have never had the privilege of having Sophia in one of my own classes, my administrative roles have afforded me the opportunity to get to know her quite well the last couple of years. Beyond our official interaction, I have shared several conversations with her the last year or so, conversations about mutual academic and personal interests, her pursuit of a graduate education, travel, as well as numerous other topics. In short, I feel confident I can provide an accurate assessment of her academic abilities, as well as the personal traits she possesses that make her a worthy candidate for graduate study. I must say that I am incredibly pleased to write a letter of reference for Sophia, as I have a very high opinion of her.

Sophia is an excellent student whose intellectual abilities, breadth of knowledge and eclectic interests make her stand out from most undergraduate students I have met thus far in my career. Beyond her very impressive intellect, Sophia possesses an even more impressive work ethic. She performs well in all her classes and demonstrates an exceptional degree of academic maturity for an undergraduate student. It is these traits, along with her high GPA (3.83 overall, 3.9 in her major), that earned her one of our prestigious SHSU Environmental Science scholarships in 2023.

Some of Sophia's traits that I respect the most are her intense desire to learn, her elevated level of academic maturity and responsibility, and her motivations to pursue learning outside of the classroom. For example, she personally coordinates the design and content for a quarterly newsletter focused on issues of environmental sustainability that is available to the broader SHSU community. This endeavor has led her to research a variety of issues and topics that naturally fall under the umbrella of environmental science, but also requires her to pursue knowledge in areas outside of her own primary interests – such as urban, cultural & ethnic geographies, local economic trends, and social dynamics. By pursuing awareness of such issues, outside of the context and structure of an actual class, in my estimation Sophia is already operating like a graduate student.

In addition to her academic abilities and interests, Sophia is also an absolute pleasure to interact with. She works and communicates very well with others, be they students, faculty, and/or staff, and thrives in learning environments requiring collective interaction. She is basically an interesting and pleasurable person to have around. She has even participated in several of our field experiences that are built into our geology and geography courses, irrespective if she is enrolled in the courses or not, which also reflects her intense desire to learn. In short, she is simply one of the nicest young women one could ever hope to meet. While I am excited she will be moving on to graduate school, her presence in our department will be sorely missed.

In summary, Sophia is an excellent candidate for your program. My sense is that she has yet to fully reach her potential and has yet to find her academic niche. She will prove to be a solid student who is certainly worthy of pursuing a graduate education. I not only recommend that you accept her application for admission, but I would also strongly encourage you to consider her for an assistantship if funding is available. I am confident that everyone involved with your program would find her to be a positive addition to the program and your institution. If you have any additional questions regarding Sophia, or my experiences with her, please feel free to contact me at any time.

Sincerely,

Dr. John B. Strait

Professor of Geography,  
Assistant Chair & Geography Coordinator  
Department of Environmental and Geosciences  
Sam Houston State University  
Huntsville, Texas 77341  
[jstrait@shsu.edu](mailto:jstrait@shsu.edu)