

Application Related Information

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

Recommendation Information

Recommended By:	Robert Boyd	Recommenders Title:	Dr.
Recommenders Institution:	Auburn University	Contact Name:	Morgan Shelton
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:	10/03/2023 08:11 AM	Recommender Assessment:	I recommend this applicant without reservation.
Recommendation Type:	General	Recommender Form:	Letter of Recommendation
Recommendation Entity ID:	1024000110634156	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.radius
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Other Information

Created Time:	09/18/2023 07:29 PM	Created By:	Josephine Bernier
Modified Time:	10/03/2023 08:11 AM	Modified By:	Josephine Bernier



AUBURN UNIVERSITY

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October 3, 2023

Dear Admissions Committee:

I enthusiastically recommend Ms. Morgan (McKenzie) Shelton for your Master of Environmental Studies program. I have known her for about 3 years, starting when she enrolled in my Conservation Biology course in Fall semester 2020. She then was a student in my Senior Seminar course in Spring semester 2021, the semester she graduated from Auburn University.

McKenzie is a good candidate for your graduate program. She is a bright and talented student, as she demonstrated in my Conservation Biology class. This is a rigorous course designed for senior-level and graduate-level biological science majors. McKenzie was actively engaged in each and every class, did well on exams, and also demonstrated advanced scientific writing ability. The most extensive of the writing assignments was a Rare Species of Alabama Webpage: this is similar to a term paper in that it involves literature research and develops a student's ability to synthesize and summarize disparate information while writing in a literature-citing format. McKenzie did particularly well on this assignment, scoring 97% of the points possible, which placed her webpage among the top five produced that semester. Her outstanding performance showed her ability to conduct library research, organize information, and assemble it in a scientific format using excellent writing skills. Her final point total in the course placed her as the #8 undergraduate student out of 36 undergraduate students enrolled in the class.

In McKenzie's final semester (Spring 2021) she enrolled in my Senior Seminar course. This is a capstone course with 12 students in which we take a relatively deep dive into information literacy, scientific communication (both written and oral), and critical scientific evaluation. A major task in the course is for students to select a recent scientific paper and orally present it to the class (via Powerpoint), including at the end a critical evaluation of the work's strengths and weaknesses. The presentation is then followed by questions from the student audience. It was in this assignment that I noticed that McKenzie had a good ability for critical scientific thought, providing insightful questions and comments on the research papers presented by other students in the class (she also did a good job in analyzing the paper that she presented). I had not noticed this ability in my Conservation Biology course because it was a more traditional lecture-style class. My observations of McKenzie in the Senior Seminar class show me that she is ready to further develop her analytical thinking and research abilities in a graduate program.



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I have not had the chance to see McKenzie in action in original research, so I hope you will get perspective on that aspect from another letter. I do know that McKenzie has been involved in undergraduate research in Dr. Courtney Leisner's lab in my home department of Biological Sciences, and that the research was physiological rather than ecological. However, the tools that McKenzie learned through that experience could be very useful when applied to ecological questions and so I think can be valuable to her as she develops and tackles her graduate research questions in your program.

In sum, McKenzie Shelton is a good prospect for graduate school. She has good communication skills, information literacy skills, and study skills. She ranks among the top 10% of students I have worked with in my 35 years here at Auburn University and I would be glad to have her do research in my own lab. She will be a fine addition to your graduate program.

Sincerely,

Robert S. Boyd, Ph.D.

Professor and Assistant Provost for Institutional Effectiveness