

January 15, 2025

Dear Colleagues:

Please accept my letter of strong support for **Ms. Emma Bartholomew's** application for admission to the Master of Environmental Studies at Evergreen State College. Emma is on schedule to complete her bachelor's degree in biology at Eastern Washington University (EWU) in 2025. Emma is a great student and I'm confident that she will thrive in your program. I am excited to see her pursue an advanced degree, because I think it is just what she needs to focus her interests and grow her skills.

I know Emma as an instructor and a supervisor. She has taken several courses from me over her years at EWU (BIOL 173, BIOL 411, BIOL 302, and ENVS 400). These courses span everything from introductory Biology (BIOL173) to advanced coursework in Field Botany (Biol 411). Her Field Botany collection was exceptional, and she received high marks for the course, however her coursework in other classes has been variable. I honestly think her excellent performance in Field Botany is more telling of her potential and reflects her excitement to tackle hands on work, which will make your program better suited to her learning style than ours has been.

Emma has a great work ethic and for that reason, as well as for her enthusiasm for and knowledge of our native flora, we hired her to work in our developing seed increase garden, where we're growing native plants for seed to aid our Prairie Restoration Project (<https://www.ewu.edu/give/prairie/>). Duties at the increase garden include working outside weeding beds, building beds and mulching pathways, and inside washing pots, watering plants and cleaning seed. The outside work is typically hot and dirty, and the inside tasks are tedious. Emma has engaged all that has been asked of her with enthusiasm and energy! As a supervisor, I don't have a lot of time for hand holding, so I really value students like Emma who can be trained to perform tasks and be left to their own devices to carry out those responsibilities. Emma is that student.

Unfortunately, I do not have any insights into Emma's skills in doing science, but I agreed to write this letter because I see in Emma the necessary passion and heart to succeed at whatever she chooses. What is true for Emma is true for many of our undergraduates, and that is they simply don't get enough time in any one area to really reach their stride. In this respect, graduate school is a great next step for Emma because while she's been able to flirt with a lot of ideas, she hasn't really had the opportunity to dive in with all her might. I reiterate my excitement that she will have this opportunity in your program.

We know that academic skills are critical for success in graduate school, but it has been my experience that personality is a factor too. In this regard, Emma shines! She has a warm and friendly demeanor, a quick and lovely smile and a calm, easy manner. She's a lot of fun to be around. I am confident that Emma will make a great graduate student because she is well organized, disciplined, motivated, self-directed and enthusiastic. Moreover, she is keenly interested in being challenged, and she can take criticism and learn from it! The combination of her current skills coupled with her curiosity and willingness to learn more will make her a delightful and competent master's student.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if I can provide additional information or support on Emma's behalf.

Sincerely,

Robin O'Quinn, PhD