

Application Related Information

Application: Application Incomplete
Grad Program Applying To: MES

Iteration Name: 202610_GR_G
Program Name: MES

Recommendation Information

Recommended By: Stacey Weiss
Recommenders Institution: University of Puget Sound
Waive Access to Recommendation Ltrs: I choose to waive my right to review this recommendation.
Recommendation Form Submitted: ✓

Recommenders Title: Professor
Contact Name: Meaghanne O'Flaherty-Gean
Recommendation Waiver Choice:
Recommendation Status: Received

Received Date: 12/31/2024 02:46 PM
Recommendation Type: General
Recommendation Entity ID: 1024000121479542

Recommender Assessment: I recommend this applicant.
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: 12/29/2024 10:55 AM
Modified Time: 12/31/2024 02:46 PM

Created By: Josephine Bernier
Modified By: Josephine Bernier



31 December 2024

To the Evergreen State College Graduate Admissions Committee:

It is my pleasure to write this letter of support for **Meaghanne O'Flaherty's** application for the Master's in Environmental Science program at Evergreen State College. I am a Professor of Biology at the University of Puget Sound where Meaghanne graduated in 2019 with a B.S. Biology degree and a minor in Environmental Policy and Decision Making. I did not have Meaghanne in class with me until her final spring semester (BIOL 472: Animal Behavior) but I knew her prior to that because of her participation in many aspects of the department community. She was an active member of the Biology Honor Society Phi Sigma, volunteered at our campus natural history museum and served as a docent at public-facing events, and conducted interesting research with my colleague, Dr. Peter Hodum. I always enjoyed talking with Meaghanne about her research utilizing camera trap images to assess small mammal populations on Destruction Island. I also enjoyed talking with Meaghanne about her love of animals and interest in serving and protecting them. While as an undergraduate student and since graduation, this passion manifested itself in Meaghanne's role as a vet tech. I am excited to learn that she is now starting her path towards a research career by pursuing a Master's degree in environmental science. Overall, Meaghanne stands out as a dedicated, mature, and hardworking student with strong oral communication skills. I am confident she will make a wonderful addition to your 2025 cohort of incoming graduate students.

In my Animal Behavior class, students work in groups to conduct original research at our local zoo, Point Defiance Zoo and Aquarium. For this project to be successful, students must work collaboratively to design the study, and they must take responsibility to work independently during their data collection and analyses. Students then come together to develop a collaborative presentation that they give to the zoo staff. Meaghanne excelled in all aspects of this project. She contributed to the original project direction, experimental design, and ethogram construction. She was diligent in her data collection and analyses, really shining here in demonstrating her dedication to producing high quality data for the zoo. She was communicative, as needed, to help identify any issues of concern re: consistency in data collection across observers. And she was professional in her presentation to our community partners at the zoo. Her lab group's project focused on the spatial use and social behavior of the zoo's Magellanic Penguins, and Meaghanne chose to focus her analyses on the spatial relationship of juvenile penguins to others in the colony. Throughout the project, I was impressed with the collaboration Meaghanne developed with her partners, the respect she held for our community collaborators, and her strong presentation skills.

Meaghanne was also an active participant in all other components of the course – always alert, engaged, and prepared. She asked insightful and interesting questions. She expressed a high level of academic maturity and confidence. She was proactive in her learning, coming by office hours as needed to clarify course expectations and course content, or just for a friendly chat about fun animal behavior facts. It was clear to me that she deeply interested in the course material and dedicated to the learning process itself. I'm thrilled to learn that this passion has further developed since her graduation and is now compelling Meaghanne to further her academic training with a Master's degree focused on animal behavior and conservation.

I hope you hear directly from Meaghanne's thesis advisor (Dr. Peter Hodum) as well. My impression is that Meaghanne worked very independently on her senior thesis project, spending long hours training AI to filter thousands upon thousands of camera trap images, carefully scoring individual images, and analyzing them to assess the impact of introduced rabbits on small mammal populations of Destruction Island. It was a while ago now, but I distinctly remember talking with Meaghanne extensively on her careful methodologies and her thoughtful approach to complicated statistical analyses.

Since graduation over 5 years ago, Meaghanne has been working with animals (and their people) in clinical veterinarian settings – something she began even prior to graduation. From these experiences, I am confident she has the managerial and interpersonal skills, as well as the work ethic necessary to excel in graduate school. I am also confident that she has the personal drive and academic dedication to succeed. While at Puget Sound, Meaghanne interacted very well with her peers, as well as with the University's faculty and staff; I believe she treats all people with respect and values diversity. I am confident that Meaghanne will contribute positively to the sense of community and collaboration you surely aim to develop in your cohort of entering graduate students, and that she will be an asset to whichever faculty member's lab she ends up calling her academic home.

Best of luck to you in your decision-making. Please let me know if I can be of further assistance.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Stacey Weiss', with a stylized, flowing script.

Stacey Weiss, PhD
Professor of Biology
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