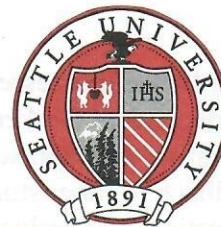


November 5, 2024



COLLEGE OF
ARTS AND SCIENCES

I am writing to recommend **MICHAEL PAZEN** to your Master's of Environmental Studies Program. I had the great pleasure of teaching Michael in three courses in his Writing Studies minor: Advanced Writing: Argumentation and Collaborative Rhetoric; Writing about Writing: Theory and Practice; and Genres of Western American Literature. In these courses, Michael excelled in all the writing and speaking projects.

Looking back and rereading Michael's work for my classes, I am amazed again by his versatility as a writer, by the complexity of his critical thinking, by the range of his intellectual curiosity, and by the sophistication of his writing. He was outstanding at everything he did in and for my classes. I want to share some specifics of Michael's writing to illustrate his impressive intellectual and academic scope. His facility with language and command of his prose style as well as his social awareness showed in his layered place-based narrative for the literature class. His narrative, "Facets of the Emerald (City)," reflected deeply on his adjustment to Seattle and Seattle University, on the relationships and friends he formed as he found a new identity and home here. Also for the literature class, he gave an excellent, comprehensive presentation on Octavia Butler's *Parable of the Sower*, and then demonstrating his expert research skills, he produced a complex researched interpretive argument on Butler's use of religion in that novel, on her connection to Afrofuturism and posthumanism: "The Role of Religion in a Co-Evolving Future." I was equally impressed by his grasp of collaborative rhetoric and argumentation (two distinct parts of the Advanced Writing class). Here, again, he exhibited his intellectual range and impressive flexibility as a writer. He taught the class a chapter from Eric Lieu's *Become America*; he crafted a powerful classical argument "The Safety of The Closet: Why Not Everyone Needs to Come Out" about the social, psychological, and emotional damage high school peers can do; he wrote an effective collaborative letter in response to Aaron Freedman's article "Can DNA Tests Tell Us Who We Are—Only If We're Racist"; and after attending Seattle's Town Hall presentation on "Who Can We Trust?" he wrote a strong argument warning of the dangers of disinformation and proposing strategies for resistance. He continued to develop that argument in the Theory and Practice class in a video he produced to inform and persuade peers how disinformation is spread in our digital age and how we must adopt habits of questioning and research to counter what we hear on news and social media sites. In all my classes, Michael exemplified the astute, engaged, highly capable student who advances learning in classes for his peers and his instructors. I loved learning from his papers and projects, and his wonderfully articulate writing was a pleasure to read.

Michael possesses other qualities and abilities that fully equip him for graduate work. He is an independent thinker with strong interpersonal skills who works well in groups and is collaborative with and sensitive to his peers. I was impressed by the insight, quality, and tone of his feedback to other students on their writing in his peer review groups. He is committed to social justice, was active in SU's Triangle Club, and was attuned to the cultural and political events on Capital Hill. I worked with Michael in a professional capacity when I hired him as a freelance writer for the textbook I co-authored with John C. Bean, *Thinking Rhetorically*. Michael wrote a probing reflexive listening-to-learn discussion post in response to a troubling passage in *The Grapes of Wrath*; in this post, he modelled a blend of literary close reading skills with the intense listening to other and listening to self that leads to enlarged understanding and empathy. In all my classes, Michael was a delight to work with—deeply invested in his learning, prompt, reliable, gracious, and personable. He quickly grasped the concepts we were studying and applied his strong critical thinking in inventive and creative ways.

I am thrilled to learn that Michael is applying to graduate school and has decided to pursue a path that combines his recent years of work in ecological restoration and leadership in the environmental field with his love of learning and his strengths as a writer. I am confident that he will embrace all the opportunities of Evergreen State University's interdisciplinary program and become a major leader in his field. I have been effusive in this letter because, truly, I can't praise Michael enough as a student and as a person. He will excel in your program and be a highly effective contributor to your intellectual community. I recommend him with the greatest enthusiasm.

Sincerely,

June Johnson Bube

June Johnson Bube
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English Department
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