

To Whom It May Concern:

I have the absolute honor and pleasure of recommending Emma Jones without reservation for the MiT degree program at The Evergreen State College. They have the passion, patience, empathy, and open-mindedness to enrich the lives and minds of students from diverse backgrounds; they have the tenacity and morally-driven need to teach with emancipation and critical thinking in mind; and they know that actual, freedom-based teaching is the only way towards progress and social justice. I can provide a few examples of their exemplary talent, kindness, and intellectual rigor that immediately come to mind when I think of Emma.

The qualifications that allow me to speak on this matter include my NTT position in the Department of Sociology at the University of Massachusetts, Boston, my professional expertise regarding critical pedagogy, and, most importantly, because I have had the privilege of having Emma in my life for over ten years.

I have worked with Emma as both a colleague and their supervisor. And in line with the holistic approach they take with education, I will provide a holistic account of their character and qualifications for this program.

When I met Emma, it began through fondness and admiration for their raw, bare-bones, beautiful prose and poetry. We were in a creative writing course together, and after reading their work, I knew I needed to be within their orbit. Even though I was older than them and farther into my undergraduate career, I was intimidated by the pure light that shone from them and their work. But, the second I spoke with them, that intimidation faded. They are indeed one of the most disarming people I have ever met; their ability to create psychological safety for those around them is essential to teaching and not able to be taught.

When my mother died at 19, Emma was one of the few people I found solace in because they did not say the uncomfortable words masked as pleasantries like most around me. They had not lost a parent; they did not even know me that well at that point—and that did not matter. Their kindness is something I revel in until this day. I have learned so much from them, and I would be honored to learn from them in a formalized setting. Students should be granted that gift.

As an educator, we need more teachers like Emma. Students are struggling with mental health crises, a lack of access to resources, and a deep, unsettling feeling about their future prospects. This is not new, but it is getting worse. Not only is Emma's exquisite intellectualism a gift to pedagogy, but their compassion is unparalleled.

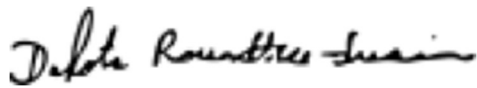
When I was their supervisor on a Congressional House race in MA, their work was always thoughtful and inquisitive; they helped move the campaign in unique directions. Their dedication to doing the *right* thing and not the *easy* thing is hard to find, in general, but specifically in a fast-paced congressional campaign. But that did not stop Emma from ensuring we were all morally driven in the right direction at all times. I was incredibly grateful for their partnership during this time. As the principal hiring director, I had to be strategic and intentional

with whom I hired; I would not have brought Emma on if I did not think they would excel, regardless of our friendship. They, as they so often do, exceeded my expectations.

Emma should not be accepted into this program because it would be a gift to their growth and self-actualization, but because it would be a gift to your community and the students they will grow to impact. You would remise to lose the opportunity to accept them into your program because, regardless, they will excel. I am honored to be a small part of that journey—and I know you will be as well.

Thank you, and do not hesitate to reach out with additional questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dakota Roundtree-Swain". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Dakota" being the most prominent.

**Dakota Roundtree-Swain, M.A., Ph.D. Candidate**

Associate Lecturer, UMASS Boston

Diversity and Inclusion Manager, Harvard Medical School

National Child Welfare Consultant/ Leader for System Change

(they/them)

(774) 274- 6297

[dakotaroundtreeswain@gmail.com](mailto:dakotaroundtreeswain@gmail.com)