



September 9, 2022

Dear Graduate Admissions Committee,

I am writing to strongly recommend Alexis Payne for graduate studies in the Masters in Teaching program at The Evergreen State College. I worked closely with Alexis in my 2021 – 2022 program In Sickness and In Health. Alexis has been a capable, thoughtful, and responsible student who expressed a particular interest in teaching. Alexis brought strong organizational and time management skills to her studies, and succeeded in meeting all the expectations for her attendance and assignments.

Alexis brings a host of capacities important for teaching: patience, attention, and dedication. In seminar Alexis was a deep listener, and when she did participate, she expressed interesting observations and questions about the texts and made connections between theory and lived experiences. She often played an important role validating and responding to the comments of her peers, which was pivotal in building the learning community. Alexis's weekly reading seminar papers were thoughtful reflections, deeply based in the readings and her observant responses to them. These papers were consistently articulate, specific, and well organized. Her work demonstrated very strong habits of thought (metacognition, synthesis, and analytic skills) and a solid grasp of key concepts from the program including social determinants of health, structural oppression, and empowerment. By the end of the year, Alexis was working solidly at the advanced level in the social sciences.

Alexis's ethnographic work demonstrated strong observational and analytic skills. She completed each of the scaffolding assignments for the autoethnography thoroughly, which contributed to the strong work she did on her final draft. Alexis wrote about how aspects of her identity have shaped both her experiences of privilege and marginalization, with a focus on trauma, mental and physical health, and discrimination. In her autoethnography, she skillfully drew on program concepts including stigmatization, social constructionism, and self-efficacy. The connections she made between her narrative and the program content were strong and demonstrated the extensive knowledge she has gained over the course of the quarter on the intersections of health, place, and well-being.

Alexis worked on projects specifically related to education throughout the year in our program. In fall, Alexis worked with three peers in the quarter-long applied anthropology and community psychology project to examine the complexities of students with disabilities in higher education. The group's highly accessible, well-practiced, thoughtful final presentation offered a clear overview of TRiO Disability Support on the Evergreen State College Campus. Group members noted that Alexis contributed substantially to the work, attended most out-of-class meetings, and helped interview TRiO staff in preparation for the final presentation. In winter quarter, the group successfully applied principles of community psychology and applied anthropology to the work, making substantial use of the Community Toolbox framework. The group's 11-page final report began with a well-researched, effective discussion of scholarly literature on campus accessibility that helped to contextualize the issue. The group's excellent, accessible final presentation, which was well-attended by staff from Access Services and TRiO Student Success and Disability Support, made a compelling case for providing additional support for students with disabilities.

Alexis internship at the Children's Center spring quarter was very successful; Alexis completed 300 hours of internship work. Alexis' supervisor at the Children's Center, Casey Lalonde, provided the following comments about Alexis' work:

Alexis Payne has successfully completed her internship at the Children's Center. She is punctual, communicative, dependable, and earned the respect and trust of her colleagues. She modified her work based on the feedback she received, and was able to take on tasks with increasing complexity. She primarily worked with one year old children. She helped them at meal time, helped them soothe and settle for nap, and comforted them. She supported our mission and vision throughout her time with us and was an asset to the Children's Center.

Alexis reflected extensively about the experience in a final essay, and made thoughtful connections between the internship and our studies of positive psychology from throughout the year.

In sum, Alexis was a strong, capable student who would do well in graduate studies in the Master's in Teaching program. Please contact me via email with any questions or comments in further support of Alexis' application.

Sincerely,

Eric A. Stein, Ph.D.

Anthropology and History

The Evergreen State College

Email: [steine@evergreen.edu](mailto:steine@evergreen.edu)