

#### Application Related Information

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Application: Application Verified  
Grad Program Applying To: MIT

Iteration Name: 202510\_GR\_G  
Program Name: MITU

#### Recommendation Information

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Recommended By: Sonja Wiedenhaupt  
Recommenders Institution: The Evergreen State College

Recommenders Title: Professor  
Contact Name: Iris Koltuniak

Waive Access to Recommendation Ltrs: I choose to waive my right to review this recommendation.

Recommendation Waiver Choice:

Recommendation Form Submitted: ✓

Recommendation Status: Received

Received Date: 02/07/2024 12:48 PM

Recommender Assessment: I recommend this applicant without reservation.

Recommendation Type: General

Recommender Form: Letter of Recommendation

Recommendation Entity ID: 1024000117444124

Recommendation Owner: Josephine Bernier

#### Recommender Form Questions

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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

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Description:

Form URL: <https://evergreenstatecollege.radius>

#### Other Information

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Created Time: 01/29/2024 01:11 PM

Created By: Josephine Bernier

Modified Time: 02/07/2024 12:48 PM

Modified By: Josephine Bernier



February 2<sup>nd</sup> 2023

To whom it may concern,

I'm writing to strongly recommend Iris Koltuniak as a student in your Master in Teaching program. I have known Iris since fall of 2023 when she joined the program I'm teaching. This is an inquiry oriented education program that is considering the purposes of education through multidisciplinary lenses. I have found her to be to a curious, open- and serious-minded human being. She demonstrated capacities to engage an inquiry-oriented stance regarding her own belief systems, to practice cultural humility, and a responsibility to listen and learn from the communities she serves. I'm attaching my evaluation from the fall quarter because I believe it speaks to her strengths that are important and relevant to both engaging with communities as an educator, and graduate work of a masters program.

Iris completed strong work this quarter that reflected an engagement with the essential question: *What is education for at this moment in time and place?* Iris engaged in relevant ways in conversations with peers, and actively took up opportunities to learn from interviews and community-based events. Iris's writing reflected the work of someone who was leaning into opportunities to consider the personal, social, cultural and political purposes of education. She also noted the importance of understanding their positionality and the social political contexts of their work as an educator.

Iris came to the program with an interest in becoming an educator. She thoughtfully engaged program texts to consider the kinds of consciousness and choices she must practice and make as an educator. She reflected on and reconsidered the nature of knowledge and her role as a learner, noticing the importance of "bring(ing) cultural knowledge into the classroom" and that "no one owns knowledge, no one is an expert and we are all always learning; in the classroom, we are all learning together." She also noted the importance being conscious of and deliberate with the expectations she works with: "empower students as learners by providing them with rigorous and challenging learning materials and demonstrating support of their learning." A strong theme in her work focused on the evolution in her understandings about the nature and purposes for literacy. She reflected on how "literacy has been used as a tool to empower some, and keep power away from others," and noted that "Muhammad's book makes me think that one of the purposes of education is to fight for education being accessible to, and representative of, all students." She has begun thinking about her responsibilities in cultivating a powerful literacy, noting: "the stories you choose as an educator help students to learn" More specifically she realized the importance of both, "connect(ing) literacy and knowledge with cultural understandings," and creating "opportunities for all students to feel seen, represented, and heard." through "choosing diverse and representative texts and materials." Ultimately Iris observed: "the importance of cultivating literacy in education, as well as the importance of multi-literacy, as there is so much more knowledge and understanding that we can acquire and have access to when we are multi-literate."

Iris demonstrated good developing skills in curating materials for a research journal that documented multiple sources of knowledge to inform an inquiry, including notes from interviews, observations on community engagements, and reading annotations. The reading annotations skillfully summarized the author's goals and key ideas. Iris took time to engage and learn about two community events: (i) "Teaching for Social Justice Conference; and (ii) a cultural bazaar at the Ashho Cultural Community Center. Notes from these community engagements included showed attention to the organizations' purposes, goals, and work. The journal was well organized and some entries where Iris wrote about what a source illuminated about the essential question. A strength of the reflections was how Iris invited herself to notice a theme related to the inquiry (i.e. literacies), and to deeply engage with her assumptions and new insights. Going forward, a next step will be to engage regular routines for surfacing insights and themes related to the inquiry from the full range of sources and artifacts she engages with.

I feel confident that Iris will bring a serious and community minded energy to the work and cohort she learns and works with.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "Sonja Wiedenhaupt". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a small dot at the end.

Sonja Wiedenhaupt  
Member of the faculty  
The Evergreen State College  
Olympia, WA 98502