

Application Related Information

Application:	Application Not Verified	Iteration Name:	202540_GR_G
Grad Program Applying To:	MIT	Program Name:	MIT

Recommendation Information

Recommended By:	Alice Nelson	Recommenders Title:	Faculty
Recommenders Institution:	The Evergreen State College faculty	Contact Name:	Shannon Barrett
Waive Access to Recommendation Ltrs:	I do not waive my right to review this recommendation.	Recommendation Waiver Choice:	
Recommendation Form Submitted:	✓	Recommendation Status:	Received
Received Date:	02/02/2025 10:21 PM	Recommender Assessment:	I recommend this applicant without reservation.
Recommendation Type:	General	Recommender Form:	Letter of Recommendation
Recommendation Entity ID:	1024000121506725	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.radius
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Other Information

Created Time:	01/03/2025 04:43 PM	Created By:	Josephine Bernier
Modified Time:	02/02/2025 10:21 PM	Modified By:	Josephine Bernier



2 February 2025

Letter of Recommendation for **Shannon (Christy) Barrett**
Master in Teaching Program at the Evergreen State College

I am writing to recommend Shannon (Christy) Barrett in the highest terms for admission to the Master in Teaching Program at the Evergreen State College. Christy came to Evergreen after completing the Early Childhood Development program at SPSCC, with the clear goal of preparing herself further to become an educator. During 2023-24, Christy was a student in the year-long program *Student-Originated Studies: Community-Based Learning and Action*, taught by Ellen Shortt-Sánchez and Therese Saliba in fall and winter, then I taught the spring quarter. At that point, Christy had been interning all year for 20-30 hours/week in various classrooms at Olympia Regional Learning Academy (ORLA) Montessori Elementary and Home Connect, and had developed considerable skills as an aide working with children K-6; she was also an incredibly dedicated student in the on-campus portion of our class, completing assignments thoroughly and thoughtfully. In both settings, I found Christy extremely responsible, and she engaged learning with enthusiasm, perceptive intelligence, curiosity, focus, and compassion. She has a strong equity mindset and asset-based view of learners. I am delighted that Christy hopes to join the next MiT cohort and have no doubt that she will make many positive contributions to the program, as well as in many young people's lives as an educator once she earns her degree.

In the core class last spring, Christy demonstrated a solid understanding of the theory and practice of community work through seminar notecards, weekly reflections/documentation, a personal narrative, and an integrative essay. Christy's seminar notecards consistently showed attentive reading of some texts, important connections across readings, and insightful reflection, offering many points of entry for our discussions. Christy did strong work in the weekly reflections/ documentation as well, offering specific learning related to emergent classroom situations, the values undergirding classroom practices, and responsiveness to school needs around food security issues for students. Christy's personal narrative was beautifully done, vulnerably connecting Christy's own educational journey in schools—especially experiences of support or lack thereof—to Christy's commitment to become an educator that cares for the whole student. Christy's integrative essay was also strong, and benefitted from a substantive revision process. Here, Christy successfully connected theory, practice, and reflection by linking the framework and practices of Montessori education to Freire and Horton's experiences with popular and liberatory education and Murray-García and Tervalon's framework of cultural humility. With moving anecdotes from the classroom, Christy showed how deep listening and humble engagement centering community needs are essential, ongoing work for liberatory education.

As a final project in spring, designed as a "give back" contribution to Christy's mentor-teacher, Christy created a zine, "A Day in the Life of Ms. Bella's Classroom," to make widely visible the brilliant pedagogy evident there every day. With a gorgeous aesthetic combining photos of children engaging in a range of activities, plant imagery, and a poetic description of each scene, Christy's booklet offered a primer on principles of Montessori education brought to life in this K-2 setting, guided by a remarkable teacher: at once a powerful tribute and a useful and engaging explanatory tool.


Christy has an exceptional amount of direct classroom experience working with children. Christy's Internship Learning Contracts during fall, winter, and spring were designed for Christy to gain skills and

experience working closely with elementary students, build academic and social emotional support, and cultivate an inclusive classroom culture through curriculum, while preparing to become a teacher. Christy's mentor teachers/field supervisors affirmed that Christy robustly met these student-developed learning objectives. Kyrian MacMichael, MEd, Upper Elementary Montessori Teacher, described Christy's work in the fall in these terms (excerpted from longer narrative): "Christy naturally stepped into the role of assisting individual students or small groups of students as they navigated their course of study in our classroom. To ensure Christy understood the task or lesson students would be completing, Christy observed direct instruction for the material and concept the students were learning, then worked with students who needed support, delivered gentle redirection when off task, and provided a compassionate ear when they were frustrated or confused. Christy showed dedication to understanding the students as individuals. I recall Christy working with one student quite often who has struggles with dysgraphia. Christy was able to work with the student and support him in completing handwritten tasks and in tasks using computers to complete digitized versions of assignments with much success. Christy showed amazing levels of patience and compassion while working with him. Christy took initiative to work with students as need arose. Christy displayed the utmost level of professionalism in all interactions with students, families, staff, and teachers during this time with us."

About winter and spring quarters, field supervisor Isabella Rogol, Lower Elementary K-2 Montessori Teacher at the Olympia Regional Learning Academy (ORLA) described Christy as a "natural teacher" and added (excerpted from longer narrative): "Christy observed the teacher working with students on building foundational skills for reading: phonemic awareness and phonics. Christy helped assess students' reading levels and did guided reading with them under my guidance and supervision. Christy learned a great deal about how we aligned our Montessori lesson sequences to our teaching to the Common Core Standards. Christy wrote notes, asked great questions, and had conversations with the students about academic topics and about their lives. Christy worked with students that need a little extra help, and has done an amazing job working one-on-one. Christy is very flexible and accessible, and loved by all the students in this classroom. I appreciated very much that Christy didn't impose a way of dealing with social emotional learning, but rather observed and shared ideas and concerns with the teacher, paraprofessional, other teachers, and parent volunteers. Christy has an amazing ability to work as a team player and is very understanding of other methods and respectful of others' ideas. Christy is also very easy to talk to and is respectful and interested in learning about people of different cultures. Christy's approach is very kind and curious, and Christy is always ready to do the work." In addition to last year's internships, Christy currently (since Sept 2024) works as a sub para-educator K-6 for around 15 hour/week in the Olympia and Tumwater School Districts, gaining further valuable experience with kids in school settings.

Clearly, Christy has so much to offer, and aiming toward a future career in teaching seems like a great next step for drawing on her talents and skills while giving her many opportunities to grow and to give back to her communities. I enthusiastically recommend Christy Barrett for admission into Evergreen's MiT program. If you have further questions, please contact me at (360) 789-7538 or at nelsona@evergreen.edu.

Sincerely yours,



Alice A. Nelson, Ph.D.

Member of the Faculty

Latin American Cultural Studies/Spanish