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MIT Program- Personal Essay

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Growing up, I loved to play a game of teacher, where I would pretend to be a teacher and teach my imaginary students, but it was just stuff that I learned in class that day. I would also love to share what new things I learned with my parents. Growing up and even now, I always had a passion for learning. I was always taught that learning is a necessary part of growing, which is how you become independent. She was a teacher for over 20 years, so hearing the positive experiences she had with her students made me interested in teaching. Most of my family are educators, so the importance of school and learning was a large aspect of my childhood. The fluidity of Evergreen's education style aligned with my goals to explore multiple academic disciplines.

Back in the spring of 2023, I took a 16-credit program called, *Gender and Sexuality History: 1800-Today*. I enrolled in this program not having taken a previous gender studies and sexuality course, so this was a new experience for me. The class talked about pivotal moments in queer, racial, and women's history that are not talked about enough in my opinion. For example, we read the book, *The Hidden Case of Ewan Forbes*, which is about a transgender man in Scotland who had been tried on the accusation that he was not a real man. He was threatened to have his property seized and his title as a Lord vanquished because he was seen as a threat to aristocracy. This book along with a few other readings about sexism, ignited my interest to do more research about the "hidden" stipulations that society puts on certain demographics of people. For our major end of the quarter project, we had to choose a topic of our choice and relate that to the program's materials. For my project, I discussed how women used fashion as a form of expression from the 1870s to 1950s. I explained through my research that the corset was used to restrict women's freedom and created to set the societal definition and expectations for a woman. I discussed the different

perspectives for this change, such as how women's fashion evolution was accepted or rejected by women, what men thought about women using clothing to express themselves and their sexuality; and how upper- and lower-class women adapted to societal expectations.

Looking at an argument or issue from a different lens can help a writer or researcher strengthen their work. An issue that occurred when I was doing some investigating into the subject, was bias. It was relatively unchallenging to find documents, articles, newspapers, and readings about the topic- but a complication that came with that was the loads of bias in those arguments which criticized freedom of expression and sexuality. To eliminate those critiques; I explained why the topic of gender roles and sexuality was a controversy for the time period, and I included several supportive arguments for every biased article I encountered. I introduced my project to my peers and to the faculty by giving an oral and visual presentation. We were split into two groups and while half of us presented, the other half went around the room and listened to the other's presentations. This exercise improved my public speaking skills because I had to introduce my topic and communicate my research in a thorough manner that was understandable for my audience. Each student had a different set of unique questions, some of which I had to ponder so I can further explain the answer appropriately. Outside of the classroom, I continue to practice these skills. Last summer I got an opportunity to work as a youth counselor at YMCA Camp Helena. The job requires strong collaborative and communication skills, since you're working and planning with other counselors to manage all of the children. Each counselor would be assigned a group of children to supervise, and all the groups had a specific schedule to follow to evenly participate in every summer activity. For the larger groups of children, there would be at least two counselors, and for most of the summer, I would help manage these larger groups. For example, if a child injured themselves, one of us would have to walk with them to the nurse's office while the other would continue to monitor the rest of the children at their respective activity. This is a demonstration of teamwork and communication, because we are working together in supervising the children and speaking with each other about how to accomplish that.

In high school is where my appreciation for Language Arts began because I started taking AP classes which were more essay, presentation, and literature focused. Taking these classes made me value communication between my fellow students about shared topics because I was getting more insight on multiple perspectives. What I admire about the MIT program is that it draws from different bodies of knowledge because of the cross-departmental collaborations. The MIT program is partly based on cultivating a community that learns from each other and having everyone bring their own experiences to the program. As a student, I bring collaborative and communication skills to every class. An example of how I utilize those skills would be when the professor(s) pair us into groups and have us debrief on a book that we read, or maybe a question that was asked of us to talk about. Recently, we discussed the question: “what does literature mean?” My group and I worked collaboratively to discuss the question and together we found several answers. Another example of this would be teacher-student relationships. Clear communication between the student and teacher is essential to the student’s academic success and also helps the student develop a sense of belonging so they can feel more connected to school. Collaboration between the student and teacher can foster a meaningful learning experience for the student and help the teacher/professor generate effective teaching methods so their students can achieve success in the classroom. Collaboration is built on communication, which is crucial for creating a shared understanding of tasks and is also a key component for problem solving. One of my most influential student-teacher interactions was with Professor Hendricks who taught *A Place in The Past: Reading and Writing Historical Fiction*. In his program, he created a comfortable and safe environment, which made me feel seen. I felt encouraged to ask questions, despite usually feeling uncomfortable asking them. This experience made me realize the kind of teaching environment that I believe all students should have and deserve. The kind of teacher that I want to be is someone that promotes a healthy relationship with the students to learning.

My inspiration to become an educator began when I was young. My grandma showed me a classroom picture with her and her students. I remember her sharing fond memories of her days as an elementary

school teacher. It was interesting to hear about her perspective of classroom activities, the school curriculum, and her experiences with teaching. She also had a lifelong familial relationship with her students even when they entered adulthood. She remains a foundational support as I continue my academic journey to achieve my dream of becoming a future educator.

I believe I am a good fit for this program because I consider myself a dedicated learner who is willing to learn from others. Learning from others can deepen your understanding of something, which is how you can grow as an individual. Every day, I am learning from my peers which deepens my love for learning and seeking knowledge. I am someone that values education and I strictly believe that because education is not distributed or accessible to everyone, it should be taught by someone who appreciates the art of learning and growing. My goal is not only to become an educator, but to also cultivate a healthy learning environment where I can share my passion for learning and inspire the future generation of teachers.