

Application Related Information

Application: Application Not Verified
Grad Program Applying To: MIT

Iteration Name: 202540_GR_G
Program Name: MIT

Recommendation Information

Recommended By: Johann Neem
Recommenders Institution: Western Washington University
Waive Access to Recommendation Ltrs: I choose to waive my right to review this recommendation.
Recommendation Form Submitted: ✓

Recommenders Title: Professor
Contact Name: Brittain Rhodes
Recommendation Waiver Choice:
Recommendation Status: Received

Received Date: 10/10/2024 11:06 AM
Recommendation Type: General
Recommendation Entity ID: 1024000120511262

Recommender Assessment: I recommend this applicant.
Recommender Form: Letter of Recommendation
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>

Other Information

Created Time: 10/09/2024 12:41 PM
Modified Time: 10/10/2024 11:06 AM

Created By: Josephine Bernier
Modified By: Josephine Bernier



Johann Neem, History Department

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October 9, 2024

Dear committee:

I write to recommend Brittain Rhodes for admission to your program. Brittain was a student in my upper-division history course on the American Revolution in 2023. She earned an A- in my class. I want to emphasize how hard Brittain worked to earn that A-, and how much she improved over the course of the term. She did not do well on her first paper, and I offered her specific and direct feedback about how to improve her writing. She took that feedback seriously, worked hard, sought further guidance from me, and her final paper was a dramatic and substantial improvement. I was impressed not only by her academic performance but her response to a setback, her willingness to learn, and her capacity to take feedback and use it. Both her academic capabilities and her openness to learning about how to improve will serve her well as a teacher, but also will allow her to be empathetic to students' own efforts to learn.

Brittain was also one of the most thoughtful participants in our class discussions. She truly excelled in class. Some students think that being a contributor to class discussions means showing off how smart you are. Not Brittain. She understood that the purpose of discussion was to grapple openly with difficult issues and to support the conversation and each other. She was not showy. She listened to others and learned from them. When she spoke, she always did so to help the conversation in the class. To her, learning is not just about herself, but about those around her. She demonstrated to me not only her capacity to be an insightful reader of history, but to support others' learning and to use discussions to generate knowledge collectively.

Since graduation, Brittain has worked to educate visitors at the Point Defiance Zoo and Aquarium. That has been a real growth experience for her. She not only learned to love working with young people, but also about the importance of treating diverse people with respect and thinking about how to present material so that people from diverse backgrounds and with different learning needs can understand them. In addition to her academic capabilities, her work experience will allow her to connect her own experiences with the theoretical and practical readings about diversity and equity that are part of your curriculum.

Brittain's own experience, too, will allow her to connect theory and practice. As she writes in her personal statement, her sister became a single mom while a teenager, and Brittain shouldered some of the childcare responsibilities after she got her driver's license. She understands not just abstractly but from direct life experience how difficult it can be for students to focus on school when life is so complicated and demanding. That does not mean—as Brittain makes clear from her own commitment to scholarship—that school is unimportant, but that as a teacher she will look for ways to encourage and support people who are struggling to connect and thrive because she knows how much they have going on that gets in the way of focusing.

In short, I cannot imagine a better candidate for your program. Brittain is brilliant without being flashy. She seeks to work with people to generate knowledge. Both her work and life experience have taught her about diversity and the kinds of challenges many young people face. And most of all, she knows that she can always be better. She can learn and wants to learn. She takes feedback and criticism as learning opportunities and uses them to become better. For these reasons, I think she not only will be a model for young people, but that she will also be a great asset in your program cohort and enter teaching knowing that she has much to learn from her students, the communities in which she works, and from her colleagues.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "J. W. Neen". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Professor of History