

Amanda Walker  
Director of Development  
The Evergreen State College

Dear Amanda:

I am writing to request that the remaining Bilezikian Fellowship funds of \$1176 (remainder after two \$4000 Bilezikian fellowships are awarded in the spring for sustainability) be used to support MES student conference attendance fees.

I propose that we offer the \$1176 of the remaining Bilezikian funds to support MES students who are interested in attending a February conference called CONFORWest 2011: Ecosystems in Perspective: Integrating Environment, Society & Economy. This conference is geared toward Environmental Studies graduate students in the Northwest US and SW Canada.

One of MES's goals is to provide professional-training experiences for our students, as we expect them to be leaders in the environmental field as they progress throughout their careers. One of the best ways to gain experience and learn about environmental leadership is to attend a conference in which students can network with other students, professionals, and academics while learning more about the field and its interconnectedness. It is also a great way to promote the MES program in the greater region, and to help students with career exploration and future job possibilities upon graduation. We are hoping that a few students may even land summer internships or find a research project for their thesis work!

At last count, we have about 25 students interested in attending. The price is \$288 per person and includes a 4-day conference, food, and lodging (transport to Jasper, Alberta will be partially subsidized by MES). As you can see, even a \$100 fellowship for each student who applies for funding would cover a third of the conference's cost, making this opportunity a more attainable possibility for students interested in increasing their environmental skills and expanding their professional environmental network. Even though the funds would be used to support a large number of students in a small way (versus a small number of students in a large way), I am sure Ms. Bilezikian would be delighted to know that these funds were being used for such a purpose, considering the large impact the fellowship has the potential of making in these students' professional lives.

If needed, I am happy to write a letter to Ms. Bilezikian requesting that the funds be used in this manner.

Thanks for your time—I hope to hear from you soon,

Gail Wootan  
MES Assistant Director

**M.E.S.**

Master of Environmental Studies Program

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