May 26, 2020

The Sara Ann Bilezikian Sustainability Fellowship:

I am writing in strong support of Jasmin Faulk-Dickerson’s application for the Sara Ann Bilezikain Sustainability Fellowship. Jasmin has been my student since Fall 2018, taking a full-time program and following this with a series of individual learning contracts to write a memoir. During that time, Jasmin continued to distinguish herself through her independence, focus, and a commitment to her writing craft. This quarter, Jasmin finished her book, “The Last Sandstorm,” which fuses personal and cultural histories. This sustained work represents one aspect of Jasmin’s commitment to sustainable community development, which she has practiced in myriad ways. In homing school her children, she embedded herself and her family in community which Jasmin views as a rich integration of local resources and enlivening practices, including music and storytelling, which draw together intergenerational teachers, performers, students, and activists.

This fall, Jasmin was one of the presenters at Evergreen’s Equity Conference where she gave a talk entitled *Identity: The Mirror of Society.*Here, she recounted her bi-ethnic childhood in Saudi Arabia, with a Saudi father and an Italian mother. She mapped these early experiences onto her struggles and triumphs as an immigrant—in her words, “After twenty years in America, as a US citizen, [I was] once again facing the same questions of identity in a country that is conflicted and confused with the true meaning of culture, heritage, ethnicity, race and personal identification.” At the conference, she enjoined attendees to converse honestly and compassionately about the conflict between assumed identities and personal truth. As part of her presentation, Jasmin read excerpts from her book, an experience that brought the purpose of her work to fruition. She experienced a sense of her own sufficiency, of her own agency, and of her public persona. In practical terms, Jasmin’s book has helped her substantiate her role as an activist focused on building community wholeness, trust, and efficacy—the foundations of positive political and environmental change and development.

# I have no doubt that Jasmin would take seriously the honor of receiving the Sara Ann Bilezikian Sustainability Fellowship. One of her primary motivations for obtaining her MPA is to advocate for social justice—beyond identity politics—through community action. The fellowship would serve to shape and motivate her promising career in public administration.

Sincerely,

Sara Huntington

Member of the Faculty

The Evergreen State College