

July 7, 2023

Dear MPA Admissions Committee:

It is an honor and pleasure for me to write this letter of recommendation in support of Nico "Vinny" Coffman's application for admission to the Master of Public Administration (MPA) program at Evergreen.

Having known Vinny since September 2019, I have had ample opportunity to observe his performance as a student over two intensive quarters at Evergreen, and I enjoyed getting to know him on a personal level during that time. As then-Visiting Faculty in Film/Media Studies, I was in a unique position to observe on a daily basis how he interacted with his peers and the other faculty on our three-member faculty team. It is through these interactions that I gained an appreciation for his strong personal qualities while observing his academic performance and assessing his creative potential. Although I haven't had the pleasure of witnessing Vinny's most recent academic performance, I believe he would be a fine addition to your program. In particular, his professional experience in the Office of Children's Services for the State of Alaska would surely complement his persistence in challenging situations, strong sense of responsibility, willingness to take the lead on group projects while applying strong collaboration skills, and his ability to work productively with a diverse range of classmates.

I first came to know Vinny when he enrolled in *Madness and Creativity*, an intensive, full-time, interdisciplinary program that explored the links between abnormal psychology and artistic expression from the perspectives of science, literature, and the arts. This program drew a diverse mix of individuals representing a broad range of cultural, ethnic, gender, and religious perspectives. Among Vinny's classmates were international and exchange students from Denmark, Switzerland, and Thailand; re-entry students including student-veterans with PTSD; students representing various types of neurodivergence; and LGBTQIA+ students representing the broad spectrum of gender expression.

Even in a learning community of 65-75 students per quarter, Vinny distinguished himself, particularly through his creative work in both film and music. Vinny seemed to make friends easily and got along well with his classmates. This was surely due to his modest, friendly demeanor, but it is also attributable to the basic respect with which he treats everyone around him. As I learned more about him personally, I was impressed to learn that he was juggling his studies while also fulfilling his responsibilities as single parent to a young son. Vinny's strong sense of responsibility and interpersonal skills were in evidence in his approach to the filmmaking component of our program, which required him to work with small groups of classmates to produce three short films during the fall quarter and two more during the winter quarter including one based on an original screenplay. I still recall his group's shot-for-shot remake of the showdown scene from *The Good, The Bad, The Ugly*, which Vinny and his team reproduced with a striking attention to detail while also lending their own personal stamp. Vinny also took the lead as director of one short film, a humorous take on public safety videos called "Hard Hat Mo," in which he demonstrated a thoughtful approach to his work. In particular, he impressed me by his willingness to engage with constructive criticism even when it revealed shortcomings in his work. While those shortcomings--a few minor continuity errors and stray objects in a couple shots--are common at this level, what is not so common was the maturity Vinny showed in recognizing the issues and in his willingness to learn from his mistakes.

Having recently learned that Vinny was able to complete his undergraduate degree at Evergreen a year ago despite the daunting challenge of raising his son alone during the pandemic, I have every confidence that he will bring the same level of resilience, adaptability, and thoughtfulness to the MPA

program, and hope you would give favorable consideration to Vinny's candidacy. In addition to his strong connection to Evergreen, I have every confidence that you will find his unique personal background, friendly and modest demeanor, and his willingness to embrace challenge to be an asset to any community that he wishes to join—including yours.

Please feel free to contact me should you have any questions about Nico "Vinny" Coffman's suitability for the MPA program at Evergreen.

Sincerely yours,

Albert Lee, M.F.A.
Summer Faculty in Media/Film Studies,
Visiting Faculty in Media/Film Studies ('19-'20)