

Application Related Information

Application: Application Verified
Grad Program Applying To: MPA

Iteration Name: 202510_GR_G
Program Name: MPA

Recommendation Information

Recommended By: Kathleen Saul
Recommenders Institution: The Evergreen State College

Recommenders Title: Evergreen M.E.S. Facility

Contact Name: Vanndon Maxwell-Miller

Waive Access to Recommendation Ltrs: I do not waive my right to review this recommendation.

Recommendation Waiver Choice: I do not waive my right to review this recommendation.

Recommendation Form Submitted: ✓

Recommendation Status: Received

Received Date: 03/15/2024 03:44 PM

Recommender Assessment: I recommend this applicant without reservation.

Recommendation Type: General

Recommender Form: MPA Letter of Recommendation/Form

Recommendation Entity ID: 1024000117943992

Recommendation Owner: Josephine Bernier

Recommender Form Questions

How long have you known applicant:

1.5 years

Applicant ability as self-directed learner: Van knows what he wants to learn and has taken advantage of Evergreen's flexible curriculum to tailor his undergraduate and graduate journeys to achieve his goals. He is very self-directed.

Time since last contact with applicant:

1 hour

Applicant as productive member of group: Yes. In the Master of Environmental Studies (MES) program, students work on group projects as well as individual papers and theses. When working within a group, Van's enthusiasm for a project may make him seem to dominate. His heart and mind are in the right place and he does fulfill all group expectations of him.

Relationship with Applicant:

Faculty/Mentor

Applicant most significant strengths: Van loves both archival research and GIS. That's an interesting combination that allows him to bridge the past, present, and future.

Ability to complete rigorous grad program: Outstanding

Responsibility/reliability: Outstanding

Communication Skills - Oral: Excellent

Communication skills - written: Very Good

Service Orientation-sensitivity/empathy: Outstanding

Ability to work independently: Outstanding

Ability to handle stress: Very Good
Ability to analyze/problem solve: Outstanding
Openness to feedback: Outstanding
Ability to work in a team: Very Good

Ability to think critically: Outstanding
Ability to think creatively: Outstanding
Potential for leadership: Outstanding
Personal/professional reflection: Very Good

Description Information

Description:

Form URL: <https://evergreenstatecollege.radiu>

Other Information

Created Time: 03/12/2024 11:43 PM

Created By: Josephine Bernier

Modified Time: 03/15/2024 03:44 PM

Modified By: Josephine Bernier

15 March 2024

To whom it may concern,

I am very excited to recommend Van Maxwell-Miller for entry into the Master of Public Administration program at The Evergreen State College.

I have known Van during his time in the Graduate Program on the Environment at Evergreen. I first met him during our orientation day when we bonded over a discussion of energy projects across the United States and his eagerness to help with a book I was co-writing with a colleague. I grew to know Van better over the next year and a half, serving as both a teacher and his faculty advisor. I was part of the faculty team for two of the first-year core courses in our program in which Van was a student (Conceptualizing our Regional Environment and Research Design and Quantitative Methods) and as the faculty of record for an elective (Energy Policy in a Geopolitical Context). Based on those experiences, I would describe Van as very smart and eager to learn, goal-oriented, energetic, and very concerned with the well-being of fellow students.

Van seeks out opportunities rather than waiting for them to come to him. In an age when many students take a passive approach to education, Van works to ensure he gets the most out of his time in school and his time with faculty. For example, he jumped on the chance to contribute to a book as part of an Independent Learning Contract (ILC), reading an article and early chapters about the Energy Regulatory Investment model that would form the basis of that text. He then dove into the academic literature and grey literature to find material for case studies based on that model. We met regularly to review what he found and the direction he wanted to head next. It was truly refreshing to work with someone so excited about the work!

Van is passionate about his education. When he has not found the quarterly electives on offer aligning with what he wants to learn, he has worked with faculty to craft ILCs (Evergreen's version of independent study). He did that with the book, with Geographic Information Systems (GIS), and to learn Python programming. That also means he works well on his own to reach the goals he helped devise for those contracts.

Van does not shy away from challenges. When he confronts an injustice or feels others have acted contrary to the rules or the law, he takes action. That's inspiring for both faculty and students. That action orientation led Van to his latest challenge—a thesis exploring the change in value of the traditional lands held by the indigenous people of Washington State as a basis of reparation claims. We have worked together to overcome hurdles of information access, data analysis, and composing a thesis that draws on legal cases and GIS rather than scientific experimentation.

Finally, Van has served as a sounding box, a big brother, an informal advisor, to other students in the program. He has a wealth of knowledge he has gleaned over his years at Evergreen. He also willingly listens to their concerns and will make sure they get heard. Students are lucky to have Van in their cohort.

To reiterate, I am excited to recommend Van Maxwell-Miller for the Master of Public Administration program at Evergreen.

Kathleen M. Saul, Ph.D.
Member of the Faculty
The Evergreen State College, Olympia, WA