

March 5, 2013

Dear SDA Graduate Portfolio Committee,

It is with great pleasure and enthusiasm that I submit this letter for Ms. Emily Wolfkiel. I first met Emily four years ago as we collaborated together at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. As we approach graduation from Seattle University, I am so grateful to have served alongside such a dear friend, colleague, and peer. Emily is a passionate, supportive, and brilliant individual and it has been such a great privilege to have learned from her during our time in the SDA program.

The impact that Emily has had on the Seattle University community is difficult to measure. I am in awe of her ability to hold so delicately both her personal and professional values while producing high quality work. Her integration of her commitment as a social justice ally, enthusiasm for student development and interest in research and assessment has been truly remarkable. One way Emily demonstrates this unique ability is through her graduate assistantship at the Center for Service and Community Engagement. As the first person in this position, Emily quickly identified a need for more intentional training for student leaders working in a low-income and culturally diverse community. There was a particular gap around multicultural competency. I admired Emily's ability to efficiently cast a vision for ongoing training around issues of access to higher education, white privilege, and intercultural communication. From this, I witnessed her create a curriculum for her students grounded in research, student development theory, and good practices. This was no easy feat, but as always, the outcome outweighs the challenge for Emily. Because of Emily's initiative, strong facilitation skills, and comfort with difficult conversations, her students are more effective in partnering with the community through increased self-awareness, an understanding of oppressive structures, and ability to make deeper meaning of their experiences.

For as long as I have known Emily, she seems to easily establish herself as a leader and trusted colleague among her peers. Her leadership in the SDA program includes facilitating a discussion on white privilege, serving as editor of the SDA student journal, and acting as a mentor in writing and research. Since our undergraduate studies, I have worked with Emily in several capacities including workshop development, facilitation, and class projects. Like many, I find collaboration with Emily to be a joyful and fruitful experience. Emily has a way of offering priceless contributions through her advanced set of skills and knowledge while also creating an environment that encourages others to be their best. She approaches life and work with a sense of inquiry and adaptability which reflects her dedication to life-long learning and effective partnerships. This intricate balance is one of many aspects of Emily's character that make her such a gifted professional whose presence allows others to thrive.

Emily is a very talented and reflective practitioner and researcher. However, what is most impressive about her is that she remains humble, compassionate, and supportive in the midst of her varying responsibilities. She has a way of bringing the best out of her students and colleagues. Although difficult to summarize, Emily's professional promise rests in her devotion to continual self awareness, willingness to take risks, creativity, leadership, and dedication to creating an affirming and inclusive environment for students and colleagues. Looking forward, I have every confidence that Emily will continue to make significant contributions to the field of student affairs.

Genuinely,

*Sha'terika Antoinette Perkins*