

WASHINGTON AND LEE UNIVERSITY

June 20, 2011

To Whom it May Concern,

I am writing to affirm the awarding of an innovation credit for Washington and Lee Universities Chesapeake Bay Program. In the first three years of its operation it has been transformative for not only the community in which the university resides but for the students and employees of the University. It has fostered connections that did not previously exist between stakeholders of the local agricultural community, state agencies and the university community through education and application of scientific and cultural knowledge.

In 2008, Washington and Lee University developed the Chesapeake Bay Program through funding from The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. This program is tailored to immerse students into the environmental, social, economic and cultural realities of the Chesapeake Bay watershed, one of the nations' most valuable and endangered ecosystems. Since its creation, the program has focused on place-based teaching which integrates students into local watershed issues of land use and how individuals can impact the health of the local watershed and the Bay. It engages across academic disciplines and connects the campus community with the various stakeholders including the farming community, environmentalists and governmental organizations. The program has spawned novel research efforts and positively impacted the university's curriculum and as well as the state's efforts to improve local water quality. Through participation in community town hall meetings, the program has interacted with hundreds of community members.

I would be glad to discuss this innovative program as needed.

Sincerely,



E. William Hamilton, Ph.D.

Associate Professor of Biology

Washington and Lee University