



Multicultural Research and Resource Center  
4400 University Drive  
SUB I, Room 225, 2G6  
Fairfax, VA 22030-4444

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Dear Colleague,

This letter serves as an evaluation of the George Mason University's (Mason) Student Training for Environmental Protection (STEP) program, an exceptional program in many ways.

STEP provides a unique opportunity for students at Mason and other colleges to learn about environmental organizing, activism, and advocacy through an anti-oppression lens. Throughout the week long training, participants acquire a comprehensive organizing model. STEP intentionally encourages participants to not only learn how forms of oppression relate to environmental degradation, but how to avoid replicating oppressive organizational campaigns. From workshops and discussions covering issues such as environmental racism, environmental and social justice, intersectionality, and eco-feminism, STEP encourages students to acquire the skills they need to succeed as campus and community organizers while helping them develop their passions. While other youth organizing training exist, STEP is the only environmental training program with the interconnectedness of anti-oppression work.

I was invited as a special guest speaker during the summer 2011 program. Though I am not affiliated with STEP, I assisted in some of the anti-oppression workshops covering feminism, racism, and how they relate to environmentalism. I have extensive experience in working with students and student groups, anti-oppression, and training programs.

Since May 2005, I have served as the Associate Director of Faculty Partnerships and Curriculum Development at the Multicultural Studies Research and Resource Center (MRRC) at George Mason University. Prior to working at the MRRC, I was Associate Director of the Women's Studies Research and Resource Center for five years. I am a National Coalition Building Institute (NCBI) trainer, a founding member of George Mason University's Staff Senate and Safe Zone Ally Program. I attend annual NCBI Campus Conferences, and in February 2009, attended Undoing Racism, a training of The People's Institute for Survival and Beyond, and the White Privilege Conference this past April 2011. I provide

regular classroom trainings on gender as performance for Professor David Kravitz' Diversity in Organizations course, and classroom panels and trainings on white privilege, and critical ally behavior.

As a scholar, researcher, teacher, and educator with specific interests in whiteness, critical race theory, queer and feminist theories, intersectionality and multidimensionalities of identities, critical pedagogy, and media literacy, I can say that the STEP training is an exemplary leadership model that gives students a knowledge base, a praxis-based model for organizing, and a practical reflection of integrating anti-oppression work into that framework.

I commend the STEP program, its organizers, and most importantly its participants as I know this group is at the forefront of environmental change.

Sincerely,

Dr. Rebecca A. Walter  
Associate Director