

5 December 2024

To whom it may concern,

I am writing this letter of reference for Kathryn Miller, who I have worked with for multiple years in a few different capacities. Initially, Katie was a student of mine in a few courses, including Animal Behavior and Canine Detection. For both of those courses, in the lecture setting, Katie was an excellent, curious student. Beyond the basic stellar attendance and attention in class, she also performed well above her peers on understanding of content and ability to show her knowledge in both written and oral form. She also puts a lot of effort into continuing her learning beyond the classroom, attending multiple (optional) seminars and presentations, and reaching out about additional research articles and content for courses I've taught but she was not able to take. This persistence in pursuing further education above and beyond the requirements for graduation is very rare among students. I would expect if you asked any professor in our program who had her in class, they would all remember Katie for the exact same qualities.

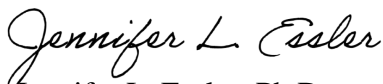
Moreover, Katie is also an exceptional dog trainer and handler, showing high levels of empathy, patience and skill with a wide range of dogs. I had the pleasure of having her in my Canine Detection lab where she trained one of our highest-drive German Shorthair Pointers to find search and alert to a target odor. Despite being a "pet" dog, he certainly was no pet dog; he would regularly get over threshold and distracted, and was a very difficult dog to handle. Katie however was quite successful in training him on this complicated task, so much so that he was subsequently chosen to work on a research project detecting a species of invasive fish in a local river.

During the summer, when Katie was also completing her internship in parallel, she worked on campus with myself and another student to complete a research project investigating the potential for the dogs to utilize olfaction to find that same species of invasive fish in a laboratory setting. For this project, she handled six very different dogs, and was involved with every aspect of the study, from conception, to data collection, to fish collecting and coordination, and continues to be involved in the writing of the manuscript that will be submitted to a peer-reviewed journal in the very near future.

Suffice to say, Katie would be an asset to any program that has the opportunity to work with her. She is a determined, motivated, curious, bright human who I have no doubt will be successful in anything she puts her mind to – especially if she remains in any field working with dogs.

Please do not hesitate to reach out to me with any additional questions regarding this reference.

Sincerely,



Jennifer L. Essler, Ph.D.

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