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B.Sc. Natural Resources Conservation, Major in Science and Management – 5th year

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March 4th, 2022

To whom it may concern,

It is with pleasure that I would like to nominate David Moulton for the Jordan L. Burke Memorial Award in Forestry for Best Graduate TA. I was lucky to have David as a Teaching Assistant for CONS 486 in Term 2 of 2021. CONS 486 was a course on fish conservation and management, in which we learned about the ecology, physiology, and behaviour of fish, as well as effective management strategies for fisheries and living aquatic resources through the lens of conservation. A large portion of the course was also dedicated towards exploring and analyzing diverse case studies about successful and unsuccessful fisheries conservation and management scenarios, which students presented in a group seminar series. David oversaw and was responsible for many of the course components, including lesson development and teaching of several lectures, constructing and maintaining the course Canvas page, creating assignments and assignment guidelines, providing comprehensive and constructive feedback, and communicating with students to discuss ideas and provide guidance. Overall, he had great influence on how smoothly the term went and still to this day is one of the best Teaching Assistants I have ever had in university. Only a few of the many exemplary qualities he demonstrated were his empathy, kindness, dedication, communication, helpfulness, and extensive knowledge on the topics covered in the course throughout the entire term.

There were many ways in which David supported my individual learning during the course. One way that David did this was through sharing his ample knowledge about many aquatic species and strategies for their conservation and management during the lessons he gave to the class. Although the entire course took place online, David still made his lessons on the conservation and management of sockeye salmon, Pacific herring, and Atlantic lobster informative and interactive through asking questions to encourage creative thinking, welcoming student input, and incorporating discussion components so students could share their ideas. The discussions in his lessons strengthened my learning experience because I was able to clarify my understanding on the topics being covered, as well as hear the thoughts and ideas of my classmates. This allowed me to better remember the material and further utilize it in projects and assignments. The presentations David used in his lessons were also always simple yet engaging, and he was well-prepared to present and answer questions in each of his classes.

Another way in which David supported my learning was through his involvement in and contributions to the course projects and assignments. He created new and detailed guidelines for presentation and essay assignments that clearly outlined the path to success. When it came to feedback and grades, David evaluated assignments in a timely manner, his marking was fair and aligned with the guidelines that he provided, and his comments were always kind and constructive, pointing out areas for improvement. For the seminar series portion of the course, David was in charge of finding new and more inclusive topic options, such as the gender dynamics in fisheries topic that my group researched, and the literature to go along with them. David also instituted an outline step for our essay assignment that was not graded. It was an opportunity to receive his feedback and advice on our essay during its planning stage, which I found extremely valuable. David also dedicated a lot of time to creating and managing the course Canvas page, where he shared important learning materials,

assignment instructions, extra links and resources to supplement course content, and a discussion board for asynchronous student participation and interaction. The Canvas page was organized, thorough, and easy to navigate. Near the end of the term, David created a reflection assignment where we could share our thoughts about the class and reflect on what we learned. In this final assignment, we summarized what we found exciting and troubling about fisheries conservation management, and what we think is needed for the future sustainability of fisheries. Since it was not a research exercise, it gave me an opportunity to reflect on what stood out to me during the class and share my own thoughts on those topics. This further solidified my understanding of the material.

Outside of structured class time, David frequently made himself available to answer questions or discuss ideas either over email, Canvas, or in person through a scheduled Zoom meeting. I often had questions about my assignments, and I never hesitated to email David. He always responded quickly, answering all of my questions and addressing my concerns in a way that gave me the information that I needed without making me feel ashamed for asking. David consistently went above and beyond to make complex topics more comprehensible and give detailed explanations that I could apply for success in future projects and assignments, while also providing any extra guidance that I needed. In one instance, I emailed David about my concerns regarding a twenty-page paper we were assigned. I was worried about it because I had never written anything that long before and I didn't think I could do it. When I expressed my concerns to David, he got back to me the next day with a long and detailed response full of advice on how to conquer the essay from his personal experience as a student and Teaching Assistant. What stood out to me the most was his empathy, understanding, and words of encouragement. It truly felt like he cared about my success and wanted me to feel seen and heard. It was not what I was expecting, but this experience further proved that David would go the extra mile to be present for his students regardless of how busy his schedule was, which made him an outstanding Teaching Assistant.

As a student who has received immense support, guidance, and encouragement from David, I think he is the most deserving of receiving the Jordan L. Burke Memorial Award for Best Graduate TA and I am confident in nominating him for it. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any further questions or if I can provide any more information to strengthen David's candidacy for the award.

Sincerely,

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