

Dear Rick Morse Scholarship Committee,

Please accept this letter of support for Tanner Pignone's candidacy for this award. I have known Tanner for more than a year as his professor and as the coordinator of Paul Smith's College Open Mike Night.

As a Faculty Fellow for the Creative Arts, I have enjoyed the rebirth of Open Mike Night after the isolation forced upon us by COVID. We have had consistent crowds that have hovered +/- 10% of the college's student population on any given Thursday. They show up during the easy parts of the semester and the hard parts. A core of student and faculty musicians, poets, and comedians have also shown up. Tanner has been one of those musicians.

Tanner plays acoustic and electric guitar and sings. He regularly performs in a small group with other students as well as performing in regional venues as part of an indie folk/rock band. Tanner is a solid player and he is dutifully self-deprecating in the coffee house setting. That being said, he shows up. He easily works with other musicians, both students and professors, sometimes spontaneously, sometimes well-rehearsed. He started driving the van for the Helen Demong's student choir, then joined it. Either way, Tanner embodies the spirit of Paul Smith's College Open Mike Night. It is one of the few college activities that engages students, faculty, and staff equally. We all come, regardless of what pressures, hassles, or challenges we are facing. We set aside the expected roles of students, faculty, and staff to share a little bit of beauty in whatever form or shape it happens to take that night. Tanner has been a quiet anchor of both the event and its core values that have emerged from this year's Open Mike Nights.

Tanner has been a solid student in my Nature and Culture class this semester. He works hard, thinks deeply, responds constructively to criticism, and offers insights during our small and large group discussions. Tanner is not the student who raises his hand to answer every question. He listens intensely and says something when he has something to say.

Several times this semester, Tanner has missed class due to his role as a Marine Corps reservist. Like any responsible student, he informed me of his upcoming absences and we talked about making up the work. But, the story doesn't end there. Tanner told me that his time in the military shares a similar quality of collaboration and common purpose as his music. In both cases, individuals, with all their talents and their struggles, commit to supporting each other in moments of performance, pressure, and shared goals. He also explained that his training has often taken him to some of the most diverse and beautiful ecological spaces in the country. In his downtime during these trainings, Tanner has found that his music connects him not only to his fellow soldiers but also to the landscapes they explore. Like his music and his academic work, Tanner's service to our country is steeped in a quiet, thoughtful groundedness that he has only begun to explore. I look forward to following the development of this earnest, gentle, and courageous mind.

Tanner exemplifies the best of this scholarship's criteria by combining Environmental Studies and the Music. He also integrates those parts of his life into his military service. I highly recommend him for this award. Please feel free to contact me with any other questions about his candidacy.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Glenn McClure', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Glenn McClure, Paul Smith's College