

January 12<sup>th</sup>, 2024

To whom it may concern,

It is my honour to craft this letter in strong support of Dr. Melissa Armstrong's faculty application. Dr. Armstrong's mentorship and instruction made an indelible impact on my experience at graduate school and enabled me to vastly expand my research communication skillsets. Their course inspired me to embark on a significant marine science communication journey that has opened myriad doors and provided very meaningful personal and professional outcomes.

Dr. Armstrong instructed a data visualization course in my first semester of graduate school. During this module, they taught us how to use new software (Adobe Illustrator), generate scientific illustrations, and design and deliver research communication resources (e.g., presentations, posters). Majority of the content was brand new to me and, having come from a large undergraduate institution where I had very minimal opportunities to practice public speaking, I was quite intimidated on day one. Thankfully, Dr. Armstrong's approach to delivering content was extremely engaging and inspiring, and I quickly shifted from being intimidated to feeling excited about the content and opportunities.

While it has been seven years since I took their module, Dr. Armstrong's creative and accessible approach to delivering complex and technical material still stand-out to me and their course was one of my favourite. They interwove personal anecdotes into the course material to strategically demonstrate the content's applicability, provided direct support to each student, and encouraged us to teach and learn from one another. The course culminated in an oral presentation where we showcased our scientific illustrations to our department and practiced delivering scientific content in an accessible and clear way. I was incredibly nervous for this presentation, but come the day, felt very encouraged by Dr. Armstrong and safe in the class environment they had fostered.

When I reflect the main learning and personal growth outcomes of my graduate school experience at the University of British Columbia, one of my proudest accomplishments is my confidence in public speaking and enthusiasm around science communication. That first presentation, and the learning outcomes from Dr. Armstrong's course, opened a whole new arena of exploration, growth, and confidence for me. Since then, I have given over 70 public talks to diverse audiences that span academia, government, Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities, non-profit organizations, and industry. A cornerstone of my current position involves presenting complex science to myriad decision-makers and community members – and I still employ many of the skills and techniques that Dr. Armstrong instructed.

Overall, I highly recommend Dr. Armstrong for faculty consideration based on their dedication and ability to create informative, supportive, and highly impactful education experiences.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Fiona Beaty". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Fiona Beaty (she/her), PhD  
MPA Network Science Coordinator  
Coastal First Nations – Great Bear Initiative Society