Dear Dr. Kramer,

The coronavirus uprooted everyone's lives and caused major disruptions around the world. But it failed to keep this public announcement under its grip. After a mere 30-day delay, I am proud to announce that I have been selected as a 2020 University of Washington Husky 100. I want to honor Dr. Holly Barker, Lorna Hamill, Kai Wise, Jon Olivera, Tami Hohn and countless other folks who have helped and shaped me throughout my undergraduate education at UW. First Nations at UW, Research Family, and the Southern Lushootseed learning communities also deserve my full and sincere gratitude. Whether we make frybread, ponder some of the most mysterious roots of a Lushootseed phrase, or critique the shrinkage of “Exclusive Economic Zones” in the Pacific, I feel valued as a family member. Few groups at UW have been as welcoming, inclusive, and deeply personal to me.

It is difficult to talk about recognition without a reflection on what is meant by "We Did It." During my youth, I lost both of my parents to cancer: my father in 2007, and my mother in 2017. I remember when the doctors told me that never in their careers had they seen anyone who will have to live on their own without any family members. That defined my long and often rough journey to figure out what family and healing means to me. But I started the journey blind. Although I had a pretty good idea of what it meant to experience college as a first-generation student of color, I had no idea about what it looks like to experience college without parental nor kin support. No one to my knowledge has been able to articulate, in popular or scholarly literatures, the unique challenges and needs of students who have completely lost access to support from kin family.

So, when I say that "We Did It," I really mean to say that my peers, mentors and friends at UW have generated success through their willingness to tackle the unknowns of welcoming me into their families. Their support has motivated me to contribute deeply to Native American and Pacific Islander student communities at UW through projects such as my research abroad in Samoa and my project in mapping bus routes to Lushootseed place names right here at home. The Husky 100 recognition is a celebration of my UW families, who help me to heal and become more comfortable in my own skin. I attribute my success as a UW undergraduate to the sense of family we learn to create for each other, and for all who come before and after us. Family is what makes my forthcoming Honors thesis, *Expressions of Family as Strengths of Indigenous Communities: Importance of Healing, Continuity, and Relationality for Indigenous College Students’ Educational Success*, more compelling today. I and everyone around me have grown during my Husky Experience.

I personally want to express my gratitude to the Anthropology department for being a valued part of my Husky experience. My experience as a Medical Anthropology student has taught me the value and importance of stories from the communities I engage with. I credit the department for its support in my development as a writer, researcher, and more importantly a critical thinker. There is so much for me to do before I graduate this Spring, so I wanted to end here by saying fa’afetai lava. I am deeply honored to have been awarded the 2020 Husky 100. While I am optimistic of my future as a language scholar, I am currently facing the job market during a difficult time. Any connections for jobs would be greatly appreciated!

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