

Statement of Purpose

I lived in the Bay Area of Northern California through most of my childhood. During this time, my mother and I were homeless, on food stamps, and lacking any supportive environment. Due to the trauma my mother experienced when she was a child, she lost her job and involved herself in the social disease of drug abuse. For myself, I never got to see my mother as she would be gone continuing her harmful relationship with substances. My only family was with other local homeless individuals; we would congregate to form a community. I felt embarrassed, especially when going to school and seeing the other kids able to afford school lunches and take the bus. I had to walk to and from school every day as I could not afford the bus tickets. Eventually, I was able to move in with my father up in Lewiston, Idaho.

It was night and day. While I now had the emotional and financial support I needed, I also received frequent antisemitic comments and biases from the rural community of Lewiston, due to being a pansexual, Jewish cisman. In addition, homeless individuals - especially if they were a person of color - were seen as lower than by this new community. When I went to undergrad at the University of Idaho, I originally wanted to go into some form of media as I felt that I needed to spread the word and reveal the major social gaps that marginalized groups were facing in the Inland Northwest. I was hired at the local broadcast news station, KLEWTV. I received so much experience from this job, but the biggest skill I learned (from the role of being a part-time reporter and production assistant) was that the people I wanted to help could not be helped through only news stories. Furthermore, I found myself at a crossroads and I wanted to change my direction in life as I was not achieving what I was wanting, nor understanding what I needed to know to tackle structural issues.

In the Fall of 2019, amid my school-related confusion, I started dating who would end up being my first long-term partner. While I thought they provided the stability and certainty that I was looking for, I quickly found myself in an emotionally abusive, dependent relationship. With this relationship, my anxieties regarding my college major, and, eventually, also the pandemic onset in March 2020, I felt trapped and desperately needed a fresh start. I left that partner and applied to WSU for Fall 2020. I immediately became more politically active by doing research into sociological theory and discovering authors such as Patricia Collins, W.B. Dubois, and Weber. I eventually changed my major to Sociology. The field of Sociology grabbed me like no other area of study, and it helped contextualize the social forces and material conditions that shaped my childhood, and the lives of those who I wanted to help. I excelled in my sociology classes while working part-time at the news station. I expanded my sociological research knowledge to my internship with Washington State's Department of Social and Health Service by creating literature reviews and data collection for policy proposals. I got a taste of how research plays a major role in policy efforts for groups such as children experiencing maltreatment. The internship gave me experience, but also allowed me to see the continuous issue of self-actualization while being a white cisman and realized the importance of shared and differing experiences among communities.

One of the biggest stories I have covered for years with KLEWTV is Lewiston's one homeless shelter shutting down due to staffing shortages. In addition, the pandemic created a surge of wealthier individuals migrating from metropolitan areas to lower-income rural communities. This massive move caused the housing markets in these small towns to inflate and cut out lower-income local individuals. The concern is where communities that cannot migrate,

due to climate impacts, will go, and how they will survive with changes such as sea-level rise, the inflation of their living expenses, or the removal of wealth from their communities.

I wish to pursue a career in public policy with an emphasis on housing, urban planning, and climate migration in relation to housing. I think that continuing my education with graduate school in pursuit of a Master's in Public Administration and concentration in Public Policy with Evergreen State College will help in achieving that goal. ESC's program offers a variety of classes that help in shaping practical policy efforts among communities in need, such as the ones I have found myself in. Classes like Immigration Policy and Poverty: Who, What, Why are logical continuations from the sociology classes such as Sociology of Food and Social Inequalities. Furthermore, I find the emphasis on internships through community involvement valuable in contextualizing the systemic issues discussed in class to the real people that need a social safety net. I look forward to working with faculty members, specifically Doreen Swetkis as they study urban planning and adult development among low socioeconomic communities. An example of Swetkis work being a connection to what I wish to pursue was an older article relating to how property tax abatement can measure a neighborhoods private investment, criminal activity, and property tax equity. It is predicted that climate migration may elevate the same wealth disparities with what neighborhoods one may love in, and I wish to be part of providing support to the forcefully moved families.

In conclusion, I am a student who is looking for a program that cares for the people who are left behind and wish to apply their talents to a better future for those who need it. I think that by challenging the similar systemic struggles I faced, I can utilize what this program teaches me and provide the help I wanted to give when I was a child. Thank you so much for hearing my story, and I sincerely hope you consider me for your graduate program.