

Statement of Purpose for Master's in Public Administration at Evergreen College

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Why Public Service?

On a surface level, a graduate degree in Public Administration stands out to me as being a very practical and versatile credential that can help me accomplish my goals of reaching new heights in the non-profit and government sectors. Yet, more profoundly, having worked in the field of human services I started to realize why I want to further my education. I want to hold positions in organizations that impact the system and add my layer of perspective while reinforcing it with the skills I will develop through the MPA program.

Over the last five years, I have worked at and collaborated with organizations that served people of color who were experiencing homelessness, poverty, the criminal justice system, and foster care. Within these organizations, the very services that were created to serve those folks were directed by those that did not look like, nor could relate to the community they served. The leadership was not reflective of the people they served and therefore they did not possess the ability to tailor their programs through the lens of the experiences their clients have had.

Through my experiences as a service provider/client advocate, I've realized I love serving youth, especially those who are experiencing some of the same challenges that I experienced growing up. I also felt as though I could relate to those I serve with my lens of similar experiences sculpted by homelessness, poverty, being a first-generation college student, and being involved in child protective services.

Gradually I realized that I can inspire little organizational change in my entry-level positions. I know I want more decision-making power, responsibility, and opportunities to demonstrate my leadership qualities. My professional goal is to become a program director for a workforce or post-secondary training program. I recognize that I want a bigger platform to change these systems in my community and I believe that a graduate degree in public administration will allow me to get there.

Why am I a good addition?

I believe I am an excellent addition to this program because of my resilience, desire to grow as a leader, and community involvement. Throughout my life and my academic experiences, I have demonstrated what I argue to be the values that make me a strong addition to any organization and leave a meaningful impact upon my departure.

I have demonstrated resilience in overcoming hardships in my life while balancing my academic journey and work. A glance at my transcript, I possess a 2.92 cumulative GPA, which is slightly under the minimum requirement. What is not seen on my transcript are the challenges I faced acclimating to a predominantly white, affluent school with a rigorous course load. The private, liberal arts university was very different from my diverse Tacoma public high school. For the first year and a half, I had to adjust to the increasing intensity of courses while having the obligations of family and work weighing heavy on my shoulders. In the last 2 years of my college journey, I demonstrated an academic turnaround while maintaining a balance between caring for my schizophrenic mother, working a job, and taking on leadership roles.

I am also an exemplary leader that is involved in my community. During my time in college, I raised \$7500 for childhood cancer research for St. Baldrics, was the treasurer for the Latinx affinity group, held a Philanthropy chair position that coordinated several volunteer events as well as held the position of Recruitment Chair in my fraternity. Post graduation my community involvement has not ceased. I have volunteered with the mayor's Youth Commission of Tacoma, built a young adult council with Workforce Central, volunteered for the University of Washington- Tacoma's Latinx Community Celebration, and managed Treehouse's Culture and Fun committee. I care deeply about those in my community as well as those I work with.

Why Evergreen?

There is a multitude of reasons why Evergreen's MPA program is my first pick. Some of these reasons include Evergreen's reputation, accommodations, and the possibility of a legacy.

Evergreen is a leading school in innovative teaching practices, without sacrificing academic rigor. Boasting a 15:1 student-to-faculty ratio with a co-teaching model is excellent for my learning style as this would grant more intimate class sizes to be able to ask questions and seek assistance when needed. Evergreen also demonstrates a culture that constantly centers inclusion and equity in every conversation. The reputation precedes itself, as I have met and worked with alumni of this program and I am baffled by how skilled and well-rounded the graduates are in their job and their communities.

Secondly, I have researched schools local to me and have found that Evergreen specifically offered the most accommodation out of all schools. If accepted, I intend to work simultaneously and it comforts me that the program itself is based around the schedules of those who work a standard 9 am to 5 pm job. During an informational session with Marcia Zitzelman, I learned of Evergreen's Access Services. Having ADHD is a manageable challenge in which I have had success with simple fixes like extended exam times and a quiet space in my prior academic institution.

Lastly, I choose to apply to Evergreen is that my mentors graduated from the MPA graduate program. This is meaningful to me because without my mentors I would not have considered attending college initially due to the cost, complexity of navigation, and the negative self-talk I have had being a first-generation, low-income, man of color. It is my dream to walk the path they have walked and share these experiences with them.