

Tell us what brings you to public service and to the Evergreen MPA program. Why do you want to pursue graduate study in public administration in general and at Evergreen in particular?

My interest in public service and policy developed through grassroots organizing. I have been doing advocacy work at the intersections of abolition, disability justice, and racial and gender equity for the last 20 years. After using my training and experience to develop a disability justice and racial equity consulting practice, collaborating with clients as diverse as The University of Washington and tech companies like High Spot, I migrated into a full-time position with King County as a Disability Equity and Change Management specialist.

I have lived a life that the negative sides of policymaking have shaped, having had to navigate both the Special Education system and authoritarian violence within state medical facilities (the latter of which left me with permanent disabilities). Because I view the world through all these intersections, I saw that policy can harm communities as much as it can save them.

I had always rejected academia because academia had rejected me as a neurodivergent youth. I developed the courage to pursue a college education in my late 30s. Navigating college has been a struggle for me because of the need to fight for the bare minimum ADA compliance that would enable me to be successful in this environment. However, when I finally secured the appropriate accommodations, I immediately flourished, developing a love for learning and a passion for using my experiences to help the community.

I chose Evergreen State University to pursue my graduate studies because of your nationally recognized outlook toward education. As a survivor of the public Special Education system, I

have learned to embrace my unique learning style, and I want to attend an institution that values and respects that. I appreciate that the Tacoma campus is smaller, as a smaller campus gives me more opportunities to connect with the professor and other students in my learning journey. I also admire that Evergreen, especially the Tacoma campus, focuses on building, growing, and learning about the community.

Evergreen will give me the ability to design an educational program around the passions that I already have. I will be able to advance not only my career but serve my community in innovative and exciting ways. The community has been crucial to my existence; I am still alive because of community support. I have dedicated my life to public service in my career and social praxis.