

Shane Everbeck Statement of Purpose

For the last fifteen years of my life, I've been driven to understand how and why organized groups of people act the way they do and this evolved into a desire to understand how policy was created and implemented. The start of my interest came from wanting to know why my high school wrestling team cooperated so much better than the football team. I paid close attention to how the different styles of the coaches shaped the development of the players.

Then, while in community college, as a part of the student council, I became increasingly concerned with how disconnected student representatives were from the wider student body. There were no feedback mechanisms or accountability in place except with the college administration. To become a representative, a student only had to collect 25 signatures from other students because elections could not generate a meaningful turnout in a commuter campus. What I found much more concerning though, was the way in which policies were decided. For over a decade before I was enrolled, Whatcom Community College had run a childcare center that served both students and the wider Bellingham Washington area. Due to budget cuts, the center was set to close unless the associated students bridged the funding gap. Without any consultation of the wider student body to understand what their priorities were or engaging stakeholders from underrepresented communities who most heavily relied on the services, the student council voted down the request. At the time, I didn't have the language to explain why I didn't agree with how we made that decision. But it deepened my resolve to understand the systems that structure how our collective resources are used.

After graduating from Whatcom, I went into political science at UW, because I believed that was where I would learn how government worked. I narrowed in on political economy because it tried to explain how resources and social power were distributed and operated in practice. However, I found the field unsatisfying. While many political scientists do practice their craft in ways that influence society, the methods of the field are very abstract and reflective in ways I found deeply frustrating. What I didn't get out of my formal education, I did get out, in a flawed and amateur way, of social activist work. Through work defending reproductive justice, labor organizing, and human rights campaigning I developed basic leadership skills.

The need to go further and develop a really scientific understanding of leadership and organization, which I believe is inherently applied, led me to enroll at Evergreen as an undergraduate. I sought out the Change Maker Lab because it synthesizes Systems Theory, business fundamentals, and team learning. Having an environment where I could study and learn with mentorship, access to guided learning, and a community of practice was incredible. I not only greatly increased my knowledge of organization science, combining theories like Peter Senge's Fifth Discipline model and EM Goldratt's Theory of Constraints with hands-on experience with peers.

I also fell in love with the college community and the culture at Evergreen. While in the Change Maker Lab, I collaborated with classmates to develop a consulting group to support Evergreen staff in their work. We're currently working with the Student Affairs department to support the transition team working on the merger between IESS and Student Affairs, as well as starting the first steps of helping with the redesign of new student orientation for Fall 2023. As a part of giving back to Evergreen, I also accepted

a nomination from Gov. Jay Inslee to serve on the Board of Trustees at Evergreen. My experience on the board, and meeting with staff and faculty to understand their work has only cemented my commitment to both the college and my passion for administrative dynamics.

It was talking with Evergreen president John Carmichael, who is an alumnus of the MPA program, that made me realize that it was an ideal fit for me. His experience with the program, and learning about its cohort nature opened my eyes to the opportunity in front of me. Previously, I intended to apply to MBA programs, because I saw business science as the best way to understand organizational dynamics. But while I love entrepreneurship, my passion is not business. I want to deliver tangible benefits to the community as a whole, not just particular consumers. A masters in public administration would prepare me for a career in higher education administration or other paths I'm interested in like going abroad to support economic development efforts. I am confident that continuing my educational journey at Evergreen makes sense and is the best path to realizing my ambition of further public service. It would also allow me to continue my work with the Evergreen administration and staff after graduating from the undergraduate program.