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Masters of Public Administration Statement of Purpose

Evergreen State College

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Connection to those in my community and working for its members is something that I am passionate about. Community is where I find meaning. It is what I contribute to, as well as depend upon. My personal, professional and educational experiences provide context and inform me as to the value of public service. My desire to seek further education in public administration is rooted in my strong sense of community and my need to participate. The alignment of The Evergreen State College, with the values of myself and my community are why I believe Evergreen to be the best place for me to further grow in my capacity for service.

When I was 18 I joined the military. Rooted in a vague desire to serve, I began to understand the nuances of what service looked and felt like. It was unlike the movies but that did not make it any less impactful. Much of what I learned was how to function as a member of a team, how to rely on others and how to accomplish the task at hand. While deployed, I began understanding the immense amount of people and labor that went into doing things that are taken for granted. This was due to the shifting of military efforts to the rebuilding of regions that had spent six years occupied. The results of our efforts were lukewarm. We had money, we lacked understanding.

Space, its occupation, and how people transform and experience it, were reasons for my pursuit in Sustainable Urban Development. The opportunity was provided to reconsider what I thought I knew regarding human development. I looked at how regions grow through a lens of sustainability; analyzing the factors that inspire public and private policy, and consider the

implications of those policies on human equity, economics and the environment. I deepened my understanding of the considerations that go into even the most minute adjustments.

I learned the value of the often overlooked local agencies that keep our cities functioning and began to understand the role that these organizations fulfill. Consequently; public transit became a fascination of mine. I was drawn to the unique role that transit plays in sustainable development. Transit is unique in its ability to be beneficial to the local economy as well as open opportunities for residents that otherwise wouldn't have been attainable. These paired with the environmental benefits of decreasing a region's dependence on automobiles makes public transit critical in creating a more sustainable future. Transit felt like a place that I could have an impactful change on the lives of those that reside in my community which was the ultimate direction that I wanted to be heading.

My first internship was with King County Metro, the public transit agency responsible for all of King county including the Seattle metro area. Using GIS I mapped ADA related issues and helped develop a plan for creating a transit system that would be more accessible for all residents. Eventually I would be hired to work as an Associate Planner with Intercity Transit in Olympia. Intercity's much smaller size allowed me to gain a much broader picture of all of the hats that a planner finds themselves wearing. I am connected to all aspects of planning in one way or another. While my education in planning is continuing and my understanding is becoming greater, a better comprehension of how public agencies work is important in both being more effective and making those agencies better.

While my desire to pursue graduate study in public administration is multifaceted, it ultimately revolves around community and my responsibility to it. The ability to navigate a public organization is important to function more effectively within my current position.

Comprehension of administrative processes only becomes more relevant as my circle of influence increases. While passion and hard work are important ingredients; a greater understanding of the processes allows me to better serve those within my community.

My passion for community and locality are factors in my reasoning for wishing to attend Evergreen State College. Olympia is home, and Evergreen is a notable piece of that home. Evergreen, helps shape Olympia culture, and it influences local policy. Evergreen has a reputation for finding new ways of solving problems, Evergreen allows for students to learn in ways that are organic for them. Evergreen acknowledges that intersectionality is not a buzzword but how every other aspect of our lives are and ingrains it into the curriculum.

I wish to eventually operate in a position of more responsibility than I currently am. It is essential that I be an advocate for those within my community. Being in tune to the needs of my community is important to generating meaningful solutions to its problems. Evergreen has a reputation of creating powerful advocates for entire communities and the opportunity to learn to do so as well is something I look forward to.

In my experience nothing gets accomplished on one's own. My military experience showed me how much more can be done when everyone works together. My work in the public sector has only further solidified this. I wish to attend Evergreen State College and have opportunities to collaborate with those that are different from me. Diverse perspectives are the fertile soil for creative problem solving to happen.

I do believe that the combination of experiences, education and present opportunity have positioned me to thrive in the public sphere. From an early age I was drawn to public service, my experiences taught me to value community and with that value comes a desire to make it better. My education revolving around Sustainable development showed me what thoughtful and

thoughtless decisions look like in the context of urban growth. The MPA program at Evergreen will allow me to grow and learn how to be a better public servant within the context of the community that I regard as home.