

The Evergreen State College's interdisciplinary approach to academics has given me the opportunity to explore a variety of courses to form a deeper understanding of my specific desires for future education. My goal has been to find a major that will speak to the multifaceted nature of my interests and allow me to learn valuable foundational skills as I enter the workforce. With a degree in public administration, I would become open to flexibility within my career, allowing me to become involved in a variety of nonprofit, managerial, and healthcare work.

I am interested in impactful nonprofit work in reproductive and sexual healthcare, including aiding survivors of relationship violence and fighting period poverty with sustainable menstrual products and education. Firsthand experiences with sexual health education and relayed stories of young women my age have demonstrated the consequences of inadequate and inaccurate information, inspiring ideas I have for improvement. Meanwhile, my motivation to incorporate work with female refugees and survivors of genocide stems from completing my fellowship with the Jewish Family and Children's Services Holocaust Center in San Francisco. As a fellow, I researched how the experience of female victims in the Holocaust is incomparable to that of male victims due to their sexual vulnerability and close relationships with other female prisoners in the Nazi concentration camps. I am inspired by that exploration to continue expanding my studies into investigating current events and learning about legislation directly impacting minority groups. This includes policy work such as "Don't Say Gay" bills, "Bathroom" bills, "Fetal Heartbeat" bills, requiring comprehensive sexual health education, and addressing inequality of the tampon tax. Being involved in Evergreen's Master of Public Administration (MPA) program would facilitate this exploration by allowing me to analyze public law and imagine improved methods.

Most notable in my undergraduate education has been the opportunity to carve my own path of study toward my passion for women, gender, and sexuality studies, an area of interest not often emphasized

or even included at a basic level in standard undergraduate education. My 16-credit Independent Learning Contract (ILC) titled “Sex Education and Pleasure Activism” designed to explore pleasure and the politics of sex with an emphasis on women allowed me a newfound academic freedom. With its completion, I was left with more questions regarding the historical context of the expression and understanding of pleasure from a legislative and healthcare perspective, specifically from a female and queer lens. Additional connections facilitated by Evergreen programs included researching abortion and Down Syndrome to consider the impact of societal perspectives and evolving genetic technologies in today's abortion debate. Considering the Supreme Court’s decision in 2022 to overturn Roe v. Wade with continued genetics debates on topics such as in vitro fertilization (IVF) and eugenics, this topic is becoming more urgent. In another program, I investigated how participation in the BDSM (Bondage, Discipline/Domination, Sadism/Submission, and Masochism) community affects mental health, and in turn how social stigma and discrimination impact mental health within the BDSM community. Through discovering misdirected policy and a lack of research funding, I am motivated to apply the skills I learn in the MPA program to imagine and implement changes addressing these concerns. Additionally, the flexibility of public & nonprofit administration would ensure that I could continue to cater to my educational interests with supplemental ILCs.

My academic exploration at Evergreen has been accompanied by professional development through my experience as a student-employee, most impactfully as a shop and program aide in the woodshop. Working in the woodshop, my managerial skills have strengthened as I continue to learn about budgeting work, curriculum planning, space regulation, and community building while adapting to daily needs. Bringing in past experiences to create and edit project videos, re-design Canvas pages, and work on several digitization organization projects, I have contributed as a team member while focusing on building my skill set. I have become increasingly interested in the “behind the scenes” tasks that make the woodshop classes run smoothly from a student perspective. Interacting with a diverse group

of people, most several years older than me, has motivated me to become more confident in voicing my opinion, and grounding myself in my own experience and beliefs. As a student in the MPA program, I would gain opportunities to acquire more work experience through internships, further building my skills as an employee and community member.

As a current student, Evergreen's MPA mission aligns with my values and has been a continuous motivator throughout the application process. I resonate with the emphasis on "thinking critically and creatively" as my experience in Evergreen classrooms has included the ubiquitous asking of the question "why." Seminars have facilitated space to dive deeper into the source material, critically analyzing it beyond the text. Remembering to ask "why" is an area of growth for me as I am developing my own identity as a scholar and community member who embodies a love for learning. An emphasis on "working collaboratively" has become more important since the COVID-19 pandemic demonstrated the importance of an in-person learning community to me, especially conversations extending discussions beyond the classroom. Casual lunch and after-school conversations build on seminars through the freedom of relating to more intimate and personal experiences, deepening individual investment. Weighing this opportunity against online MPA programs, I return to the value of an in-person learning community, specifically a cohort of diverse students varying in age, each with their own experiences to contribute and build upon.

These ideas come together with the element of "imagining new possibilities in order to accomplish positive change in our workplace and in our communities," my inspiration as I embark upon my graduate education journey. Positive change means reforming sex education to be medically accurate and comprehensive while addressing the pleasure gap for individuals with uteruses. Imagination will fuel legislation that rectifies gendered language, restores safe and protected access to abortion, and

promotes unbiased research to further understand aforementioned taboo subjects. My love for learning knows positive change relies on radical imagination to manifest ideas into reality.