

### Statement of Purpose

“The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others,” a famous quote from Mahatma Gandhi that has given me true inspiration and led me to where I am now (Patrick 2010). My experiences in education and employment have led to my decision to pursue a graduate degree in public administration. Throughout my education and employment history I have developed a strong foundation for public service and disability advocacy, and Evergreen’s Public Administration program can help provide me with the building blocks necessary to grow to my truest potential. My goal is to expand my knowledge and skills in public service and administration, particularly in promoting equity for individuals with developmental disabilities and their families while moving up the ladder of Washington States Developmental Disabilities Administration.

In my professional journey, I have had the privilege of working in various roles within government and non-profit organizations. After I graduated high school in 2011, I enlisted in the United States Air Force as a Machinist/Welder Technician, which kickstarted my journey in serving the public and reinforced my strong desire to help others. Serving in the Air Force also honed my organizational and problem-solving skills in a disciplined and high-pressure environment. The six years that I served instilled in me a sense of duty, commitment, and attention to detail, which are all crucial qualities for effective public administration. Serving in the military also introduced me to the diversity of meeting people from all over the country and seeing other ways of life. Four years into my enlistment, at age 22, I scrounged up the courage to come out to my family and friends as gay. This drastically changed my attitude in life, and further reinforced my inherent need to promote equity and diversity.

After completing my military service, I took advantage of the Post 9-11 G.I. Bill benefits and went to study at the University of Washington in pursuit of my Bachelor of Arts in Society, Ethics, and Human

Behavior. It was this program that opened my eyes to society dynamics and ethical issues affecting diverse communities of people throughout time and today. There was one class that sparked my passion for supporting people with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities; it was Disability in the Context of School and Society. My time in the bachelor's program laid the groundwork for my passion for social justice and equity, igniting my desire to pursue employment working with people who have Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities. Achieving my undergraduate degree was a major feat for me, as I come from a family of laborers, and I am the first person in my family to graduate high school and graduate from college. I have a passion for learning, growing, and spreading knowledge and awareness about social inequities that exist in our everyday lives.

During my undergraduate studies at the University of Washington and right before COVID-19 became widespread in 2019, I began working part-time with the non-profit organization The Arc of the Peninsula's whose mission is to "make empowerment possible." This experience provided me with firsthand insight into the power of collaboration and advocacy for individuals with developmental disabilities. When the pandemic happened in the beginning of 2020, I was promoted to Program Manager and started working full-time, while attending school full-time as well. Serving as a Program Manager and Community Inclusion Specialist, I led teams and provided goal-based services to adults with developmental disabilities. Collaborating with local nonprofits and organizations, I actively promoted advocacy and inclusion, striving to build a more equitable society. At the beginning of the pandemic, I had the wonderful opportunity to participate in the program Full Circle Meals, which delivered over 10,000 meals to individuals with developmental disabilities and their families throughout Kitsap County. Senator Christine Rolfes participated in the effort, and I was able to meet, engage, and deliver meals with her. These experiences reinforced my belief in the transformative impact of collaboration and diversity. Engaging with a diverse cohort of students and faculty in the Evergreen MPA

program will undoubtedly enrich my learning experience and broaden my understanding of the complex issues faced by different communities.

In 2022, I transitioned to a career in public service as a Management Analyst with Washington State's DSHS Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA). After six months in this role, I was promoted to Case Resource Manager, which is my current title. Through my interactions with individuals with disabilities and their families, I developed a deep appreciation for person-centered service delivery and the importance of equitable treatment. I conduct assessments to determine the support needs of clients who have disabilities like Autism, Epilepsy, Down Syndrome. Through these assessments, clients can access services to engage in the community, accomplish goals, meet personal care needs, and successfully be a part of the work force. Honestly, this is the best job I have ever had, and I plan to continue working for the DDA until retirement. These experiences further solidified my passion for public administration and disability advocacy.

The mission of Evergreen's MPA program deeply resonates with me and draws me to the program. Its emphasis on collaborative work, diversity, and fairness and equity aligns perfectly with my personal and professional values. I firmly believe that collaborative efforts are essential in generating innovative solutions and promoting inclusive practices. The opportunity to engage with faculty and fellow students who share a commitment to diversity and equitable treatment will undoubtedly enhance my learning experience and provide a platform for collective growth.

In conclusion, Evergreen's focus on fairness, equity, and advocacy for the public directly aligns with my long-term career goals of creating equitable change within the state government. My aspiration is to advance within the DSHS Developmental Disabilities Administration, shaping policies that promote equity for individuals with Developmental Disabilities. Evergreen's MPA program will equip me with the necessary knowledge and tools to effectively advocate for marginalized communities and implement

inclusive policies. Thank you for taking the time to read this statement of purpose, and I appreciate your consideration.

### Works Cited

Low, Kim Cheng Patrick, Leading the Mahatma Gandhi Way (July 25, 2010). Leadership & Organizational Management Journal, Vol. 2010, Issue 2, pp. 110-117, 2010, Available at SSRN:  
<https://ssrn.com/abstract=1852051>