

Dear Admissions Committee,

I am writing to express my interest in the Master of Public Administration at The Evergreen State College Tacoma. I am a 48-year-old Certified Peer Counselor with one year of experience working with homeless, foster, and at-risk-youth. I am passionate about social justice and driven by grit and determination to make my life a life that serves others. I believe that my unique background and experiences make me a valuable addition to your community.

I was raised by my mother who is my divine angel sent by god, and a Green Beret Captain who suffered quietly with PTSD and became a city prosecutor and public defender for the city of Tacoma. I began a career in student council starting in first grade and that continued until grade 10. I was so used to winning that I was taught to always be humble and gracious, in any outcome.

My main interest growing up was playing soccer for The FC Royals, from the ages of seven through age 15. This is where my grit began to show at a young age. The limited practice schedule of twice per week and one game per week, was not going to get me to my perfectly attainable goal of becoming the best soccer player in the world. That was my prayer every night, to be the best soccer player in the world. Unfortunately for me, the idea of creating S.M.A.R.T. goals didn't come up for a

number of years. In retrospect, I realize that I just wanted to achieve my personal best. And I want that best to get bested with my next personal best. It is how I am wired.

I started practicing my foot skills for several hours every day, on my own. I did not know anyone who was working this hard to become their own personal best, besides Rocky Balboa and Superman, so that was my team. I put myself on that team and performed as though I were on that team. Just like right now, I am on Gods team. I perform in life as though I am gods team, and that serves me in serving others, as well as having self respect. I There was loneliness in this level of effort at such a young age so I began identifying networking opportunities with my opponents and their coaches. I began playing with my competitors teams at their practices whenever I could get an invitation. In my sophomore year of high school, I secured a full scholarship with the top team in the United States, North Carolina Tar Heels women's soccer team. This was the only goal I had ever had, and I achieved it. I got a full ride with the best team in the country; all I had to do was survive the last two years of high school.

I was a very outgoing and energetic human being who had realized they were homosexual over the years but was able to suppress it and forget about it for long periods of time. In high school I started noticing that the silly dating stuff was getting more serious for my peers but not for me. That is, until I met a female that I liked over the summer between sophomore and junior year. That's when things got serious. I was

done repressing and forgetting, I was ready to live my life authentically. So, I came out at the beginning of junior year, in the middle of soccer season.

Coming out as a homosexual at Stadium in Pierce County in 1991, created an untenable situation. I was bullied at both high school and my super elite soccer team practices and games. The soccer coaches told the other players that I had AIDS and would inevitably become a pedophile. This did not go well socially. I went from hero to sicko over night. I was bullied and ostracized simultaneously. At home, my father was incredibly despondent. I was ruining my life, he said. I was no longer an acceptable human being. My support team was through with me. I was not worth the effort.

There I was, fifteen years old and already washed up. I disgraced my family. My friends thought of me as a subversive sicko with a deadly and highly communicable disease. I ran away from home, dropped out of high school and started using drugs. I was in several life-threatening situations as I was a young female on the streets who was alone and unprotected. I struggle with the effects of PTSD and the affect that it has on my life. I sit silent, and hold very still when I reflect on these times. It is not easy. Life is not easy, for anyone. It always gets hard, for everyone.

I believe that my personal experiences and passion for social justice make me an ideal candidate for the Master of Public Administration. I love The Evergreen State College. As far as I am concerned Evergreen saved my life by meeting me where I was at, so that I could achieve my Bachelor's degree. I am confident that I can use my grit

and determination, to make a difference in the lives of young people experiencing hard things. I am confident that I would be an asset to the program, and I hope that you all think so too.

Sincerely,

Alison Smith (Alister), she / they