

A Purpose-Driven Journey: Why I Aspire to Join Evergreen's MPA Program

As a child of immigrants and a proud member of the Latine community, I was raised to understand the importance of community involvement and fostering resilience wherever possible. I am also no stranger to the generational ramifications that the United States' immigration policies can have on new Americans. Due to the strong emphasis Latine culture places on compassion, sacrifice for the collective good, and solidarity amongst neighbors, I feel particularly prepared for a life of public service. This background propelled me into studying political science and sustainability at The Evergreen State College, where I primarily explored the intersections of identity, public policy, and resource management. I am excited at the prospect of continuing my studies in Public Administration to advocate for immigration and urban development policy that centers on social and environmental resilience.

My volunteer work with refugee support groups has been instrumental in shaping my perspective on immigration policy and human rights. Locally, I volunteer with organizations that provide essential services to refugees in the Seattle area, helping migrants navigate the complexities of resettlement and integration in accordance with the requirements of local governments. These programs are currently community-funded and organized, which has further developed my understanding of the lack of financial and structural support for undocumented and documented migrants alike. Through these experiences, I have seen firsthand the challenges that refugees face as they attempt to build new lives in unfamiliar environments. This has only strengthened my resolve to work towards creating policies that offer more robust support and resources for immigrant communities.

Internationally, I gained valuable insights into the global challenges faced by refugees and the critical need for compassionate and effective policy solutions. As part of my senior year, I studied abroad in Morocco, a country with a long legacy and continued function as a gateway for migration from Africa to Europe. I spent over a month attending lectures and meetings with NGOs that addressed the challenges faced by migrants in a variety of ways. Climate change was another strong focus of the program, as it is rapidly becoming one of the most prominent drivers of migration in the world. This exposure broadened my understanding of the multifaceted nature of immigration issues and the diverse strategies employed to address them.

I then took my learnings from Morocco and followed the paths many refugees take northward to France, where I volunteered at a refugee camp in Dunkirk. It was important to me

to follow this trail and understand what a journey to safety can look like for an individual, holistically, from beginning to end. It is only by understanding the hardships individuals face in the presence of physical and political barriers that we, as future policy shapers, can remove obstacles to a safe, dignified, and meaningful life for all people. This immersive experience reinforced my commitment to advocating for policies that support refugees and immigrants at every stage of their journey.

I would like to further pursue my studies at Evergreen because I feel it is philosophically the best match for my personal approach to education and scholarship. I have previously attended Evergreen and successfully graduated with a BA that focused on Political Science and Sustainability. I greatly enjoyed Evergreen's Socratic teaching model and feel I grew into an increasingly curious, creative, and self-possessed member of the learning community with each class I took. The interdisciplinary and student-centered approach at Evergreen encouraged me to think critically and holistically about complex issues, skills that I believe are essential for effective public administration.

In the short term, I aim to continue working with non-governmental organizations to develop and implement policies that support immigrant communities and promote sustainable practices. It is immensely important that we integrate environmentally conscious practices into all public works and community development projects. By pursuing my MPA, I feel I can not only become a subject matter expert but also a person who puts the needs of underserved communities at the forefront of the policy conversations currently happening in our state. The MPA program at Evergreen will provide me with the advanced knowledge and practical skills needed to drive impactful change.

My long-term vision is to lead initiatives that integrate sustainability into the core of public policy, ensuring that urban development and economic growth do not come at the expense of our environment. I am committed to using my education and experiences to contribute to a more just and sustainable world, advocating for policies that reflect the diverse needs and aspirations of all people. It is too frequent that immigrants are used as a political scapegoat when, in fact, they have always been a cornerstone of the American economy and cultural heritage. This holistic approach to policy-making is critical in addressing the interconnected challenges of our time, such as climate change, social inequality, and economic instability.

My journey has been shaped by a deep-rooted passion for public service and a commitment to making a positive impact through equitable policy reform. I am enthusiastic

about the opportunity to join the MPA program at The Evergreen State College and confident that it will provide me with the tools to achieve my career goals and make a meaningful difference in the lives of my neighbors and broader community. I hope to use the education and experience that your program offers to someday make strides in reducing the barriers to success that migrants of all origins and documentation statuses face here in Washington State.

In conclusion, my background as a second-generation immigrant and a member of the Latine community has profoundly influenced my commitment to public service. My academic pursuits and volunteer experiences have equipped me with a unique perspective on the challenges faced by immigrant communities and the importance of sustainable policy development. The MPA program at The Evergreen State College represents an ideal opportunity for me to further develop my skills and knowledge, enabling me to make a lasting impact in the field of public administration. I am excited about the prospect of joining the Evergreen community and contributing to its mission of fostering a just and sustainable society.