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Statement of Purpose

How have my experiences in education, employment, and public or community work influenced myself to seek a graduate degree in Public Administration? Throughout my life, I have often found myself drifting without a clear sense of purpose or direction. Whether it was in my various careers or personal experiences, I often pursued endeavors simply because I felt an internal expectation to do so. This pattern persisted from my pre-military days, through my time in the military, and even in the post-military phase, shaping a significant part of my identity and influencing the way I viewed myself.

During these periods, I struggled to truly discover and uncover my authentic self, as well as determine what I genuinely aspired to achieve in life. However, everything changed when my daughter came into the world. Her birth marked a turning point for me, igniting a newfound determination to pursue a higher education and forge a meaningful path forward. It was during this transformative time that fate brought me into contact with Professor DK, and our encounter proved to be a serendipitous moment that altered the course of my journey.

Through my interactions with Professor DK, I was introduced to the concepts of Progressive and Transformative Leadership. This revelation resonated deeply within me, particularly in the year 2023, as I experienced a profound shift in perspective. I realized that my motivation for pursuing a degree went beyond simply proving to my daughter that anyone can earn one. Instead, I discovered a genuine drive within me that stemmed from this encounter. This newfound drive compelled me to view my work within agencies, units, and offices through a different lens, leading me to identify the Management Analyst Position within the Equity Office as a fitting role for my aspirations.

This revelation served as fuel to my determination, propelling me to embark on the search for a Master's degree in Public Administration—an esteemed qualification often sought after in this field. Building upon my previous experience as a public servant during my time as a Law Enforcement officer in the United States Air Force and more consistently in my position at a Washington State Agency, I recognized that a Master's in Public Administration would not only enhance my expertise but also align perfectly with my aspirations. Today, as I stand at this juncture, I am fueled by a deep desire to make a lasting impact as a public servant. My experiences have instilled in me a strong sense of purpose and a drive to effect positive change within my community. By pursuing a Master's degree in Public Administration, I hope to further cultivate my skills and knowledge to become an effective agent of change and contribute meaningfully to the betterment of society.

Why do I want to pursue graduate study in public administration in general and at Evergreen in particular? Evergreen State College provided me with an illuminating experience that went beyond the traditional classroom setting. The courses I enrolled in not only expanded my knowledge but also instilled in me a sense of value and enrichment. However, what truly set Evergreen apart was the unwavering dedication of the staff and professors to a human-centric and iterative approach to education and knowledge development. Among the remarkable individuals at Evergreen, I would like to highlight Professor DK, Professor Sue Cummings, Professor Hirsh Diamant, and Professor Nancy Parkes. These esteemed educators embody the principles of iterative and human-focused learning environments, creating a conducive atmosphere for interacting with peers, interpreting diverse perspectives on various issues, and collaborating to internalize the valuable lessons shared by fellow students.

One aspect that truly stands out is the opportunity to engage with fellow students and benefit from their perspectives. Through facilitated discussions and collaborative projects, I have had the privilege of exchanging ideas and insights with a diverse range of individuals. These interactions have profoundly

shaped my own understanding and growth, fostering a sense of intellectual and personal development that extends far beyond the classroom walls. The emphasis on an iterative and human-centric approach also presents a unique opportunity to address the entirety of our education. It encourages us to critically evaluate and reevaluate our knowledge, challenging preconceived notions, and pushing the boundaries of our understanding. This iterative process of learning and growth not only strengthens our academic foundation but also equips us with the tools to adapt to an ever-evolving world. Moreover, Evergreen's commitment to fostering a human-centric learning environment has cultivated a sense of community and support that has been instrumental in my educational journey. The accessibility and approachability of the faculty and staff have created an atmosphere where I feel valued, respected, and encouraged to explore and take intellectual risks.

Which elements of the Evergreen MPA mission drew me to the program? While the examples provided are undoubtedly viable and relevant, it is important for me not to solely rely on them. They serve as significant motivations for pursuing my master's degree, as they inspire me to join the equity office and become the catalyst for change within my state agency. As a BIPOC+ male, I am deeply committed to facilitating transformation within my organization. My primary objective is to champion equitable representation and foster diversity, thereby serving as an advocate for marginalized communities. Drawing upon my unique positionality, I aim to leverage my role to empower disenfranchised groups, while also utilizing the knowledge and framework of my master's program to apply an intersectional lens in policy development and implementation. By dismantling multiple systems of oppression that persist in our society and perpetuate disparities, I aspire to contribute to a more just and inclusive future. Without delving into extensive details, my primary motivation aligns closely with my experience at Evergreen. In particular, I was inspired by the supportive and collaborative environment fostered by my peers and the staff, which sets Evergreen apart from other learning institutions. This human-centric approach resonated with me and provided an environment where I could truly thrive.