

Statement of Purpose

Life's journey weaves together a tapestry, each thread a unique story of experiences, challenges, and triumphs. My journey has been a profound exploration of resilience, passion, and purpose. I am reminded again and again of philosopher and author, Ralph Waldo Emerson, who famously said, "Life is a journey, not a destination." Indeed, the journey itself has shaped my character, instilled a sense of resilience, and ignited a fervent desire to effect positive change in the world.

My journey into academia began with humble origins, marked by challenges and setbacks that tested my resolve. Growing up with weight issues and learning disabilities, I faced bullying and social isolation, which left deep emotional scars. Despite these adversities, I persevered, driven by an innate curiosity and a thirst for knowledge. However, financial constraints prevented me from pursuing higher education immediately after high school and left me to navigate the complexities of the service and sales industry to make ends meet.

In 2016, I was victim of a violent mugging, further complicating my journey. I grappled with the physical and emotional aftermath of the attack and found solace in the words of a compassionate physician who suggested that a return to academia could serve as a path to healing. Encouraged by her wisdom, emboldened by a newfound sense of purpose, I resolved to rekindle my academic aspirations. I viewed education not merely as a means of intellectual advancement but as a transformative journey of personal growth and healing.

My educational odyssey has been characterized by a fervent pursuit of knowledge and a commitment to interdisciplinary exploration. I immersed myself in art and communication in high school leveraging my creative talents to foster social awareness and environmental advocacy through a peer-founded student TV station. These early experiences ignited a passion for activism and community engagement that would shape my future academic and professional endeavors.

At several junior colleges, I explored a diverse array of subjects: communications, political science, history, and chemistry. I earned credits and broadened my intellectual horizons along the way. These formative experiences deepened my appreciation of education's potential to empower individuals and effect positive change in society.

The turning point occurred with my enrollment in environmental studies at Evergreen State College. Here, I found a home in an interdisciplinary program that allowed me to explore a wide range of subjects: ecology, hydrology, sustainability, and agroforestry systems. Through rigorous coursework and hands-on experience, I honed my analytical skills and cultivated a deep understanding of the complex interconnections between humans and the environment.

After graduation I entered the MES program. I delved deeper into areas of interest: ecological economics, global trade, and alternative energy technologies. As a research assistant, I collaborated on projects related to climate justice, ecofeminism, and traditional ecological knowledge, further enriching my academic experience, and expanding my research skills.

Through various work experiences I have acquired a diverse skill set, ranging from corporate environments to retail and sales. As lead of owner referrals at Grand Pacific Resorts, I spearheaded initiatives to increase lead quality and sales productivity, which achieved significant success through strategic planning and team collaboration. Similarly, my roles at GameStop, Concentrix, and Cable One equipped me with invaluable skills in customer service, sales, and team leadership, that further enhanced my professional capabilities.

My dedication to serve others stems from the profound impact of support I received during my recovery. The compassionate care and guidance provided by healthcare professionals, friends, and mentors inspired me to pay it forward, make a difference in the lives of others. Whether volunteer work, community service, and professional endeavor, I strove to embody the same spirit of empathy, resilience, and compassion that helped me navigate challenging times.

My commitment to community engagement and social justice extends beyond the classroom and workplace. I volunteered and held leadership positions at McDonald's Treatment Center and Arizona State Young People's Conference for Sobriety. As an Al-Anon liaison, I connected and guided support services to those suffering from alcohol and drug addiction. Efforts included extensive outreach to encompass family and friends. I also helped establish, with a group of associates representing a multitude of tribes, a streamlined process to create a peer counseling network. Our mission was to assist youth, living on reservations, who were impacted by addiction on many levels, find help. These experiences deepened my understanding of the importance of civic responsibility and collective action to effect meaningful change, instilling a profound sense of purpose and a desire to contribute to the greater good.

Currently, I wish to achieve a master's in public administration with an emphasis on tribal governance at Evergreen. I am guided by a vision of a more just, equitable, and sustainable future. This program aligns seamlessly with my academic interests and professional aspirations, providing me with the knowledge, skills, and resources to effect positive change in tribal communities and beyond. Through interdisciplinary collaboration, community engagement, and policy advocacy, I am committed to the advancement of environmental justice, the promotion of social equity, and the empowerment of marginalized communities.

On the distant academic horizon, I wish to expand my professional repertoire and receive a Ph.D. as well as a J.D., strengthening my understanding of environmental policy, law, and governance and enhance my capacity to address pressing environmental and social challenges, both domestically and globally. Armed with a multifaceted perspective and a strong foundation in research, policy analysis, and advocacy, I aspire to be a catalyst for positive change, leveraging my expertise to serve communities worldwide.

My journey thus far is testament to the transformative power of education, resilience, and determination. I am filled with a profound sense of gratitude for the opportunities that lie ahead, and a deep sense of responsibility to make a positive impact on the world around me. With dedication, passion, and a relentless commitment to social justice, I embrace the challenges and opportunities that await me, confident in my ability to effect meaningful change and create a better future for the earth and generations to come.