

Andrew Moe

Master of Public Administration Application

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### Statement of Purpose

The world in which we live grows more complicated and precarious each day. I believe it is our duty as citizens to seek out ways we may help one another and the world reach a tomorrow in which we can lead happier, healthier, and more free lives. Due to its interdisciplinary approach and individualized style, my undergraduate time at Evergreen was undoubtedly the most enriching and effective educational experience I have had. It is because of these experiences I am confident Evergreen's Master of Public Administration program will serve my future well.

Managing multiple music stores, as well as one of Evergreen's student-led theater companies, provided me significant experience leading and working with a wide range of personalities and backgrounds, as well as creating more accessible and equitable environments for employees, customers, and fellow students. Additionally, my time as a representative to the city of Everett's Council of Neighborhoods gave insight into the inner workings of local government, along with its many challenges and triumphs. The aforementioned positions provided a context in which I could hone skills such as leadership, budgeting, organizational management, community engagement, conflict resolution, cultural competency, and logistics, among others. These varied experiences have widened my perspective, instilling in me a desire to craft and implement policy in line with the program's mission of fairness, equity, and diversity.

During my undergraduate studies at Evergreen, I worked for a small mom and pop music store, Yenney Music, and after graduating returned to my hometown and quickly found work at a regional chain, Kennelly Keys Music, which operates in the greater Seattle area. In both these

roles, I found myself swiftly promoted to positions of leadership. During my time at Kennelly Keys, I came to see firsthand how local brick and mortar stores have seen significant decreases in overall sales due to the proliferation of ecommerce. However, even when other stores in the company suffered declines in sales and overall performance, the stores I managed regularly saw positive growth. I attribute this success to the general structure with which I managed them: prioritizing treating employees with respect, dignity, and fairness while fostering a supportive work environment focusing on collaboration, organization, communication, and education. Furthermore, I discovered the paramount importance of balancing praise and constructive criticism, striving to do so fairly, honestly, and respectfully.

While managing a location in Seattle, I was reviewing Seattle's minimum wage policy and discovered that unless employees elected to receive health insurance offered by their employer, employees were entitled to Seattle's minimum wage. All of my employees were being paid the lower state minimum wage, but none had elected to receive the company's health insurance and were therefore entitled to the higher Seattle minimum wage. After confirming my conclusion, I contacted the company's payroll manager only to be met with initial dismissal of my findings. I respectfully pushed back, asking they review the policy. They quickly responded to inform me my findings had been correct and my entire staff would receive a pay raise on their next paycheck as well as back pay for missed wages. By advocating for my staff and holding the company accountable, I created a more equitable and fair environment for my staff. I will never forget my repair technician being brought to tears of joy by this news.

Later in my tenure at Kennelly Keys, I was promoted to manage a larger store located in a highly diverse area in terms of culture, socioeconomic status, and ethnicity. A typical day might consist of helping a Boeing manager one moment, followed next by a family with

language barriers, after which would come a soccer mom, and then a person experiencing homelessness. While often trial by fire, working in this diverse setting provided me with competencies to work with folks of all backgrounds and instilled a desire to learn how to better assist similar people in the future. I consider one of my greater accomplishments working with Deputy Superintendent of Everett Public Schools Joyce Stewart to set up a plan for struggling local students where they would be given music lessons in exchange for improved performance in school settings. This program, while informal and not sponsored by the district, was successful for multiple students. I know that gaining the skills needed to develop and implement programs like this through Evergreen's MPA program would assist me greatly in serving communities and students like these in the future.

While living in Everett's neighborhood of Lowell, I became involved in the local neighborhood association. I worked with fellow residents and city officials to assist with community issues such as local development, historical sign replacements, and dog park relocations, eventually being elected to the city of Everett's Council of Neighborhoods as a representative for Lowell. Serving in this role, I primarily acted as a liaison by communicating the neighborhood's needs to the city and other local officials while also conveying pertinent information to the residents of Lowell. I have always possessed an avocational passion for government and politics, but this was the first time I was able to act in an official capacity and work with those effecting policy and real progress in my community. While my tenure in this role was interrupted by the pandemic, this experience proved my desire to do meaningful and impactful work in the public sphere.

I truly believe there can be powerful positive change through carefully crafted policy. Be it economic matters, performing or visual arts, equitable access to nutritious food, agriculture,

social issues, zoning, development, community safety, or any other number of issues, I have hope there can be continued improvement in the future. I know change does not happen overnight and that we must work progressively and incrementally toward a brighter tomorrow. Evergreen's focus on diversity, valuing fairness, and strengthening equitable access at all levels resonates with me deeply. By gaining this degree from Evergreen, I am hopeful to realize positive change for our future.