

Scott Robertson

5 April 2024

Statement Of Purpose

## Statement of Purpose

What brings me to public administration and to the Evergreen MPA program? This is something I believe is easy to answer. I grew up living in poverty with a mother and father who struggled with addiction. There were so many times me and my sisters had to fend for ourselves. I bounced around from school to school never truly building a sense of community or belonging. I was always the outcast since everyone knew my parents were addicts. In my teenage years I turned to substances as well. It seemed like that was the only way to have a real relationship with my parents. I was in and out of inpatient and outpatient programs from the ages of fifteen to eighteen. At that point I was no longer on probation and could use substances freely without any repercussion. At the age of nineteen I ended up incarcerated for a year in Lewis County Jail. My incarceration was caused primarily by my substance use. When I was released, I found out I had a daughter, Sapphire.

I had a lot of time to think while I was incarcerated about my future, my goals, and what I wanted for my life. I remember prior to incarceration my main goal was to have a child, someone that would live on if I didn't make it. Someone who had an opportunity I didn't have. It was a dark way of thinking but that is where my mind was at the time. Fortunately, my child gave me a sense of purpose. I did not want to be the parent I had to grow up with, I wanted to be present, I

wanted to provide and give my child something more than I had when I was a child. At this point I had multiple felonies on my record, and it was very hard to pursue my goal of substance abuse counseling with a record like I had. I still overcame that obstacle and made it work. I found a passion for cooking and become a dining director at an assisted living facility, I stayed sober. My parents on the other hand primarily my father still struggled with addiction. One night while I was working, I got a call from the hospital. The nurse said your father is in here and he asked me to call his son, are you him? I said, "Yes, is everything ok?". They assured me my father was fine but having breathing complications. I arrived at the hospital an hour later just to see my father on a ventilator. The next thirty days was the hardest of my life. I was the primary decision maker when it came to his care. And I had no personal experience with his situation it was all new to me and frightening. I loved my father no matter the mistakes he made. At the end of the thirty days they told me there were two options to either let him go or continue to let him live on a ventilator with the best possible scenario being a paraplegic. I knew my dad would not want that for himself, he was a free spirit and being bedridden would be just as bad as him passing. I chose to let him go.

His illness was caused from his long-term use of substances. I knew at that point something had to be done. I became a peer support specialist this gave me an opportunity to use my lived experience to help others experience similar situations. In 2020 a new opportunity arose something called the New Hope Act. I was able to vacate all my charges I had accumulated and got the opportunity to work in an inpatient facility assisting people with substance use and behavioral health problems. I got my associate in applied science in Chemical Dependency, and my Bachelor of Arts in Indigenous Studies and counseling. This gave me the perfect

opportunity to assist tribal members with their behavioral health and substance use issues.

Something my father struggled with for so long. The MPA program is what I believe is the next step in my journey. Changing the policies that affect behavioral health and substance abuse is the first step to change. I am already doing my part advocating in the field and making a difference with the individuals who are struggling right now. But more must be done and the only way I believe that is possible is by changing public policy to cater to these needs.