

Ashley R. Kemper

Statement of Purpose

The Evergreen State College

Degree objective: MES

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After a career in the film industry, I want to return to academic study to undertake a graduate degree in Environmental Studies. The last twelve years of my life I have been immersed in the film, television, and commercial worlds. I applied my experience from my fine arts degree to the specialties of the art and costume departments. In most recent years I focused solely on costuming. I diligently worked to attain membership to two separate unions, the Motion Picture Costumers I.A.T.S.E. Local 705 and the Costume Designers Guild I.A.T.S.E. Local 892. I climbed my way up gaining experience from project to project, always trying to learn more and become better at my job. In the process I discovered many things. One of those insights was how consumptive and wasteful productions tend to be in their short-lived runs. A large amount of money is spent in a short amount of time and the industry does not seem to care about its environmental impact. The disposable mentality transcends the film business as I'm sure you are aware of, living in today's society, but seeing it job to job really exemplifies the reality of the amount of waste that is produced and how massive a change we need to make if we hope to alleviate climate change.

Environmentalism has proven to be my greatest passion. As far back as AP Biology in high school, I have sustained an interest in the life sciences. Over the last decade I have regularly committed time outside a busy career working 10-14+ hour days in the film industry to volunteer with organizations that I care about. I have participated in beach and river cleanups for nonprofit organizations here in Los Angeles, and recently began doing scientific surveys of Marine Protected Areas in Southern California with Heal The Bay, a nonprofit organization that does a great deal to protect our coastline and waterways, and influence better environmental policies.

Since graduating from Arizona State University in 2005, I have found myself returning to school over the years to learn about varying interests. I have taken French Conversation, Graphic Design classes and most recently Statistics in Fall 2022 to ready myself for Environmental Studies course work. Furthermore, I invested many years into becoming a better SCUBA diver. I earned my first Open Water certification on the Great Barrier Reef and also have Advanced Open Water and Rescue Diver certifications, which included CPR and First Aid training. This required intellectual and physical endurance, and I had to overcome many fears in the process. My curiosity for marine life has led me to explore many amazing oceans around the globe and deepen my commitment to preserving the natural world.

The environmental threats we face today will challenge a community of minds to create solutions for the health and sustainability of our planet for generations to come. In striving for a better understanding of what can be done, I am devoted to learning and working towards actions to empower systemic change. From a macro and micro perspective, it is unmistakable how large a role plastic has played in environmental pollution. The focus of my thesis research would be on the life cycle of plastics/microplastics and targeting upstream solutions. The creators of plastic must be held accountable for their product's environmental impact. I would investigate if this must come from government and policy, like Extended Producer Responsibility programs, or if consumers have the power alone from organizational pressure campaigns to demand change. After completion of the program, I would like to build a career as a sustainability consultant. Helping businesses establish truly eco-friendly practices and reduce waste would be extremely rewarding work.

With such a rich history in environmental leadership, progressive thought, and excellence in education, Evergreen would be a great fit for me. Your collaborative approach and teaching style would create the ideal environment for my graduate studies. With curiosity of mind, focus, and attention, I look forward to joining your program at The Evergreen State College.