

Statement of Purpose

The most wonderful part about education is that when you feel lost, you will discover a new path you can follow. When I was 9 years old, I had convinced myself that I would be the first female president of the United States. I was going to finish high school early, get a bachelors in English, go to law school, become a mayor, a governor, a senator, and then the president. It took me until my first day of undergrad orientation to realize I didn't know if I wanted to finish that plan anymore, and once I had finished undergrad, I was sure.

The first step I took in finding my new way through life involved an impulse decision made on that confused orientation day. I switched my major from English to Anthropology and it was one of the best choices I've made. I loved every minute of the two years I spent finishing my Anthropology degree, and even stayed on the next summer to do an archaeology field school under Dr. Lemke. I had quickly learned that research was in fact my passion. Learning, writing, and studying filled my mind. In every class I would cover my note margins with possible paper topics based on what I was learning that day. Unfortunately, I let my anxiety and my lack of confidence hold me back from telling my parents that instead of applying to law programs I wanted to pursue a Master's degree instead. The fall after I graduated from my Anthropology program, I packed my things and headed to New York, not to continue furthering my new career dreams of being an Anthropologist, but instead of furthering the dream I had as a child, to be a Lawyer.

When applying to Law Schools I knew that the one thing I didn't want to do was be a courtroom attorney. I had a fear of public speaking, and I knew that I would enjoy researching for cases, writing policy, and writing opinions on legislation. I also knew that I wanted to tie my passion for anthropology with law by pursuing indigenous rights law. In researching indigenous

rights, I found that the most prominent topics were those that dealt with common ground between indigenous rights and climate change. This led me to the Elisabeth Haub School of Law where my professors helped me discover a love for environmental issues and the science behind them.

The first course I took that inspired me to learn more on environmental law was a core class that focused on tort lawsuits. However, I was fortunate enough to be taught by Professor Kuh the temporary head of the Environmental Law department. She weaved environmental issues into our tort cases and sparked my curiosity. That spark became a flame the next year when I could move on to take actual environmental law courses such as Environmental Science for Lawyers, International Environmental Law, Climate Change Law, and Conservation Law. Throughout my time at Law School the careful teaching of professors such as Professor Kuh, Professor Robinson, and Professor Coplan helped me learn how to effectively research not only legal issues but also the environmental science that was behind these issues. If your science is faulty then so is your argument.

It was because of this logic and my two final papers at law school that I realized I did have the passion to apply for a master's degree. Specifically, my final papers covered environmental law in the arctic and focused on the science of climate change, permafrost, and logging. However, I found that even after spending over two years teaching myself about Arctic Environmental Law and the science behind it my lack of scientific knowledge was still holding me back. In order to truly understand what should change about environmental policy I would need more than certificates in international and environmental law. I would need to become an expert in environmental science.

Madison Roberts

My goal as a master's student in this program is to first develop my knowledge of environmental science so that I can accurately and concisely apply it to other disciplines such as Law. My second goal is to delve deeper into permafrost science so that I can generate a better understanding of how it will affect climate change, and what methods can be utilized to mitigate these effects. I plan to achieve these goals through a thesis paper that focuses on the topic of Permafrost and Paleoclimatology: How Permafrost has fluctuated and affected arctic plant growth since the Pleistocene. This topic is important to me and my goals because it ties into my passion since I began my new path in undergraduate school. It incorporates my knowledge of anthropology, law, and the environment and allows me to apply it to issues that will affect our world for generations. In addition, I plan to utilize the knowledge I develop throughout this master's program to understand how to conserve arctic flora and aid in climate change mitigation.

The Evergreen MES is the best place for me to cultivate my knowledge of environmental science and explore this topic because Evergreen is a place where environmental science and environmental policy meet. With courses such as Ecological and Social Sustainability, Conserving and Restoring Biodiversity, and Ecosystem Response to Climate Change I will be able to expand my knowledge of conservation, climate change, and biodiversity. This will help me gain access to the scientific background I need in order to truly understand the best practices for environmental law. The first day of undergrad I was afraid my path might be lost forever, but thanks my wonderful professors from undergrad and law school I found a new path and it leads to the MES Program at Evergreen.