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Application for Masters of Environmental Studies
Analytical Essay Requirement

Raising the Bar on Managing Washington's Cultural Resources:

Alternatives and Recommended Solutions

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Purpose: This essay is intended to satisfy the analytical essay requirement for my application to the Evergreen Masters of Environmental Studies program and show my skills in analysis and writing by writing about an environmental issue of my choosing.

SEVERAL PROBLEMS PERSIST:

1. It is difficult for organizations¹ to find qualified archaeologists to hire because the pool of candidates is small and dispersed.
2. Without archaeologists, organizations can't properly assess cultural resources in decision-making and project planning. Instead, they are reactionary during project activities, which delays work and continues to put Washington State's cultural resources at risk.
3. The archaeologists who hold positions are overworked and unable to keep up with the volume of projects (and permits) that need assessments and as a result, they sometimes prioritize work based on the probability of the existence of cultural resources based on known information.
4. Since it's difficult to find qualified archaeologists and plan, organizations sometimes take a light approach to managing cultural resources, it creates a silent cycle of under protection. Also, when there is no new information to add to the base of "known information" there is no allowance for changes in probability, i.e., no new information is being added to the knowledge base to expand it.
5. Both academic institutions and organizations recognize the need to do better when working with Tribal Governments when doing environmental and cultural resources work. But they don't always know how to do that and there is no place to go to learn how to work together. Unless it's your job and provided by the employer (like state and local government agencies) or a student who happened to take intercultural communication credits in college, how does one learn how to practice intercultural communication and environmental justice with the Tribes?

¹ "Organizations" in this context means businesses and government entities who have a role in managing lands or activities that affect cultural resources either through ground-disturbing activities, affecting access to traditional cultural places or resources, or related projects or decision-making.

6. There is no form of coordination to foster a career path in Washington State for candidates to fill positions, or to ensure classes are available for things like making an archaeology field school consistently available and accessible in Washington State.
7. There is no place for people to go for communication and language arts studies so that non-indigenous people and non-students can learn from indigenous people. Things like intercultural communication themed webinars or opportunities to listen to storytelling and oral histories about Washington, would be helpful if they were made available to people who want to learn.

BACKGROUND:

These problems are exposed because of several events. Separately it can be difficult to see what's happening but together they tell a more complete story. Having been an employee of a few state agencies in the areas of natural resources, environmental management and engineering, I have observed and talked with several cultural resources managers to understand their role and view².

Cultural resources are frequently viewed as difficult to manage. Partnerships with Tribal Governments are strained, and rarely included in an organization's culture. Cultural Resources Programs are often under-staffed, and lack resources for planning and analysis during project development. Often, organizations find they don't need to do *something* until they are in the middle of the project and then it is viewed as a problem and a hindrance. Everything is reactionary and time-sensitive: the project is in construction and "commerce is on the line." Conversations with active archaeologists and program managers reveal it's difficult to fill positions, find qualified applicants, and get funding for more staff.

Next, as a student, barriers can make it difficult to become qualified. On the surface, the job requirements don't seem unreasonable (see sample state agency archaeologist in Appendix), but practically speaking, the ability to complete just the core educational requirements is limited to

² These conversations have taken place at different times but included several environmental or land-based state agency archaeologists, as well as a local tribal archaeologist.

accessibility by a privileged few. Field school, for example, is like a treasure hunt and students must either have a support system to be able to drop their life for a summer to go on expedition, or have no life yet. For people who figure out this path later in life, they often give up because of the lack of access to field school or mandatory physical attendance on campus. This prevents candidates from entering the pool. Opportunities for people of color and low income are assumed to be even more reduced.

ALTERNATIVES AND ANALYSIS:

Alternative #1 Status Quo: Do nothing different.

Pros: No changes, no new effort, and no new legislation or rule-making.

Cons:

1. No problems are solved. (See above.)
2. It looks backward, in the negative, as opposed to forward, in the positive.
3. Keeps everything reactionary; people only deal with it when something happens, and then there is pressure of deadlines and firmly opposed positions: one group wants to preserve their history, while another wants to make money off the future and to check action items off their to-do lists.
4. It's not a positive learning environment and it broadens the gap between groups.

Approach #2 Medium-energy approach: Develop a coordinated effort to ensure the basic education requirements can be met, i.e., a regular, reliably-occurring archaeology field school in Washington State that ensures our cultural resources are properly managed as a state together with the Tribes. Students at all state schools could enroll and attend as "wildcard credits" applicable at any state school, meaning the classes count as if they are attending their own school, not as transfer credits. This saves a student's transfer credits for other activities, if needed for other accessibility needs.

Pros:

1. Removes one key barrier from above.
2. Theoretically, requires less energy compared to Approach #3.

3. Works with the Tribes.
4. Begins the conversation that could lead to Approach #3, or reveal new alternatives.

Cons:

1. Only one barrier is removed; Students still need significant support to attend; candidate pools remain small.
2. Who is best to implement this alternative would require a separate study to include them. Is it one school, a program at a state agency, or do Tribes take charge of it?
3. This probably needs legislative action and rule-making to enable and fund it.

Alternative #3 High-energy approach: Create a space dedicated to developing and maintaining a qualified pool of candidates to fill cultural resources positions, who know how to build relationships that lead to partnerships between Tribal Governments and everyone else, and allow the Tribes to directly participate. The ideal space is one that is already working towards similar goals and this would complement that work. Next, remove barriers to core requirements by using an educational framework that allows a competent adult to complete the work while still maintaining home and family balance, like remote technology and travel assistance to field work for qualifying students. Also, create a reliably-occurring field archaeology school with “wild card credits” that apply to any state school (#2 above.)

Pros:

1. Resolves most of the problems on the list, or begins a resolution process for the remainder.
2. Removes many barriers.
3. Brings people together to build something new together with a positive, forward-thinking approach.
4. This is a good opportunity for an institution to participate in the state’s environmental justice initiatives, develop a framework for implementing it, and embrace student energy on the topic.
5. Provides a network for ongoing intercultural studies and communications with Tribal Governments and indigenous people, and makes it available to both students and non-students.

6. Links multiple institutions to make opportunities available to more students.
7. Links faculty at multiple institutions to expand the base of expertise of the program.
8. Creates opportunities for indigenous people to teach, protect their heritage, and fill these positions.
9. Directly assists with implementing some of the State's Environmental Justice³ goals.

Cons:

1. These activities cost money and need resources and attention.
2. Enabling legislation and funding would be needed and it would be aided by updated rule-making.
3. This approach requires people to work together to be proactive and find a solution with buy-in.

CONCLUSION/RECOMMENDATION:

Implement the High Energy Approach. This approach solves the most problems and provides a clear path forward. The ideal space to house these activities is the Evergreen State College as it links with all the other state colleges through its creation legislation⁴ and it is unique because of the location and its Longhouse and Indigenous Arts Campus. The House of Welcome could include communication and history within the arts lifecycle. It fits because *art* is at the root of *artifact*. It also makes sense that Evergreen participates in the state's HEAL Act, because of the environmental studies and public administration programs, and bringing it all together.

Lastly, a recommended approach for implementation would be to ask the Tribes what they want to see and create Partners for this effort. Conduct a broad public involvement process that asks organizations what works and what doesn't work. Assess comments, develop model program with a roadmap to get there, finalize the report, and begin implementation *with Partners*.

³ The Healthy Environment for All Act (HEAL Act) was passed by the Washington State Legislature, Chapter 314, Laws of 2021, Engrossed Second Substitute Senate Bill 5141 with specific regard to "Indian Country."

⁴ Washington State Legislature, Session Laws of 1967 at Chapter 47, Engrossed House Bill No. 596; Approved by the Governor March 21, 1967.

APPENDIX - Qualifications for an archaeologist in a state agency

REQUIRED QUALIFICATIONS:

1. Meet the U.S. Secretary of the Interior's Professional Qualifications Standards for Archaeologist or equivalent (36 CFR 61), which are:
 - a. A graduate degree in Archaeology, Anthropology, or closely related field.
 - b. At least four (4) months of supervised field and analytic experience in general North American archaeology.
 - c. At least one (1) year of full-time professional experience or equivalent specialized training in archaeological research, administration, or management.
 - d. Demonstrated ability to carry research through to completion.
2. License: Valid driver's license.

PREFERRED QUALIFICATIONS:

1. Experience in/with:
 - a. Two (2) years of regional experience in the Columbia Plateau.
 - b. Consulting with Native American tribes.
 - c. Applied Ethnography, particularly in Ethnobotany/Traditional Use of Natural Resources.
2. Knowledge of:
 - a. Agency's mission, goals, and objectives.
 - b. Contract preparation and administration.
 - c. Planning principles, techniques, and current trends concerning all phases of state resource development.
 - d. Methods and objectives of natural resource planning.
 - e. Governmental administrative structure at all levels.
 - f. Federal and state cultural resource laws and regulations.
 - g. Prehistoric and historic archaeological field research methods.
 - h. Scientific report writing and evaluation of written reports.
 - i. State archaeological and historic information, DAHP database.
3. Ability to:
 - a. Carry research to completion.
 - b. Identify archaeological and cultural resources in the field.
 - c. Communicate and work closely with tribal governments and local communities.
 - d. Write clearly and concisely both for technical experts and for lay readers.
4. Other skills and abilities:
 - a. Ability to work with sensitive data and determine appropriate actions given laws, regulations, and policies pertaining to these data.
 - b. Ability to accept responsibility for major program activities.
 - c. Ability to interpret and apply agency policy.
 - d. Ability to develop long-range work plans, think conceptually, observe, and interpret trends, analyze data, identify key relationships, and draw logical conclusions.
 - e. Knowledge of Agency's mission, goals, and objectives.
 - f. Knowledge of principles of training; contract preparation and administration; principles of negotiation; principles and techniques of planning.
 - g. Knowledge of GIS systems and ability to read and create maps through ARC GIS/Arc VIEW.
 - h. Some experience or knowledge in creating and utilizing cultural resource predictive models.