

To the MES application review committee,

My intention at Evergreen is manifold, but above all my aim is to pursue a life-long career in the ecological sciences—specifically in the realms of native-species community dynamics, native plant cultivation methodologies, biodiversity conservation, and Traditional Ecological Knowledge. While I've yet to flesh out a specific study plan, I know its overall purpose: to contribute to the understanding and protecting of our local ecosystems. Before deciding, I wish to dialogue scrupulously with advisors and faculty, in order to create a study that best supports my professional development. I started at Evergreen doing a year of upper division ecology to reconnect with the academic setting and to lay a stronger foundation in biogeochemistry and statistics upon which to build my graduate studies.

I began my college education at a young age, when I was only 15 years old. The way higher education allowed me to delve deeply and inquisitively into topics was exactly what I wanted. The space to ask questions that have no answers, to learn from a vast variety of people and sources, and to access massive amounts of information, elevated how I learned in almost every way. After getting my AA, I attended Central Washington University for a year where I was thrown off-course by multiple traumatic events. These experiences tainted the remainder of my progress with a heavy mental load that did not allow me to engage as meaningfully with my education as I wanted and loved to do. Though my grades suffered, I still gained an immense wealth of knowledge from my degree in Anthropology and Foreign Language that directed me towards science, natural history, and the wide array of ways humans interact with the natural world.

Even after finishing my degree in 2018, I refused to stop studying. As my passions led me, I continued to add to my repertoire with subjects such as botany, biology, evolutionary genetics, and phytochemistry. I spent months learning to identify native and introduced plants, their uses, and their ecological roles. I dove into freshwater and plant chemistry and riparian restoration in order to steward the passive parks in my county that are often desecrated with trash dumping, stream pollution, illegal and irresponsible harvesting, and degradation from nearby development. I've always been inspired by the environment, by the people who tend to it, and the histories and futures therein. I know now that my own future lies with the land.

Eventually, I concluded that I needed to return to school. My disengagement with my degree had left me without network connections to my study field or transcripts I could present proudly for graduate applications. Many of the deeper anthropological and scientific programs I was interested in seemed unrealistic because of my grades, the high cost, and the lack of local jobs in the field. At the same time I was making these considerations, I had been immersing myself in local environments; like many others before me, the magnificent landscapes of the Pacific Northwest roused me, and I was enraptured by its ecology and natural history. The more I learned, the more I wanted to study and protect the land. I realized this goal was extremely achievable—that I could attend an ecological sciences program and forge a career that would uplift myself, my community, and my environment. I chose Evergreen for its flexibility, interdisciplinary structure, and accessibility.

I am immensely pleased with my formal return to the academic world so far. I've been able to connect with the material and stay present, the way I was back when I began my college career nine years ago. I find myself spending hours studying contentedly, only to go home and do more research on

the questions I formed throughout the day that went beyond the class materials. Learning is my greatest motivator; nature is my greatest joy; and I am thrilled to be back in an environment that challenges me to study things I might've never approached on my own. In Evergreen's Master of Environmental Studies program, I intend to seek mentorship in my studies and career path, to be deliberate and dedicated, and to prepare myself to do meaningful work after graduation.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Rosemary York