

## **Statement of Purpose**

I've always had a connection to the environment. I grew up on a small local cattle farm that also specialized in hay, firewood, and summer vegetables. Each of the operations were reliant on the local climate at the time, so I've had an interest in how the environment shifts since childhood. I also volunteered for the local sportsmans club for 8 years, where we organized large events for the town. Many of these events took place in the forest on the club's grounds that required regular cleaning and maintenance, so land stewardship has always been a part of my life.

I've taken a little bit of an interesting path in my undergraduate education, but it's led me to a multifaceted education and skillset. In grade school, I was what some might call an underachiever. I think a big part of that was due to a lack of motivation caused by my father's passing when I was eight. Without that positive role model, I had a hard time seeing the benefits that education could bring me. Once highschool came around I was getting worried I wouldn't have a whole lot of future prospects. I heard about Running Start as an option and thought it sounded perfect, so I gave it a shot.

Running Start worked out great for me, and I graduated highschool with a diploma and AA degree simultaneously. It was an incredibly refreshing experience, and I learned that I actually enjoyed school. After coming from a tiny highschool, the wide selection of classes available to me at SPSCC was amazing. I really enjoyed the music classes, and the botany class I took started my interest in the natural sciences. I also took 2 years of Japanese and capped it with a study abroad excursion in Osaka, Japan.

After that I wasn't sure that I wanted to go back and get my bachelor's degree, but I decided to take the plunge and see where it led me. I enrolled in WWU and began taking classes there in the Fall quarter of 2017. When I entered, I still wasn't sure what I wanted to study, so my education here was very exploratory. I studied linguistics, history, ancient cultures, student teaching, and other topics as well. I avoided the sciences during this time due to not having the necessary calculus requirements, and math intimidated me. After two years I still wasn't happy with my degree options offered at Western, so I decided I was going to take a break to think about what I felt passionate about. After that, I'd return to school to finish my degree later.

During my time off I did a lot of self reflection and picked up a new instrument. I played the guitar every day and found that I had improved a lot in a short amount of time. I had also been missing Japan dearly since my study abroad excursion, so I decided to take a trip back in January of 2020. I bought a ticket on a whim and was on a plane to Tokyo in 7 days. Instead of traveling with a group of fellow students this time, I was alone and in a different part of the country. I handled it well though and had a great time.

During this year I also got interested in environmental science after reflecting on the interests I had as a child. My previous education had pretty much entirely been focused in the humanities though, so shifting into a STEM degree was going to be a long, uphill road. The math requirement was also still a major cause of hesitation for me, but I think playing the guitar and my recent independent trip to Japan gave me the confidence to give it a shot. So in the Fall of 2020, I went back to community college to start gathering my prerequisites. After an academic year at SPSCC, I had completed my prerequisites and performed in the SPSCC Jazz band.

With my prerequisites taken care of, I enrolled into Evergreen. This school was perfect for me and I thrived due to the interdisciplinary approach to classes. My range of interests is very broad as evidenced by my path up until this point, and Evergreen was able to take advantage of that. It was the most immersed in my education I had ever been. My focus was in environmental science, so I took Vertebrate Zoology, Plant Ecology and Physiology, and Fungal Kingdom. I also took History of American Pop Music and Art Time In Animation as electives. These programs gave me a great overall understanding of ecology, how people interact with it, and how those interactions are expressed in art and media.

After earning my Bachelor of Science from Evergreen, I know it would be the best place for me to continue my education. I've built standing relationships with members of the faculty who I'd like to continue working with, and the program seems like a perfect fit for my diverse educational background. I'm also looking forward to the work study opportunities and completing a thesis. Plants have always been a major part of my life, and botany has been my favorite topic to study so far. I also really enjoyed my humanities classes, so I want to study horticulture, sustainable agriculture, and social/environmental policy.

Once I get my masters degree there are a few avenues I'd be interested in. I'm a member of the Puyallup Tribe of Indians, and I am an adamant supporter of their causes. Getting hired onto their fisheries or tribal government would be a viable and fulfilling option for me. I'm also interested in continuing further education and getting my Ph. D. in either horticulture, agricultural sciences, or environmental law. Evergreen seems like the perfect place to set me up for either of these ambitions. As a recent alumni, I believe it is the best educational environment for me to achieve my goals.