

Dear Admissions Committee,

My name is Alexa Martin Del Campo and I am writing to you today to express why I wish to pursue a graduate degree in environmental studies. For most of my life I have been someone who has craved information. In school, at work, in religion, in art, I wanted to know the how and the why of everything that sparked my curiosity. I have lived a fortunate life, one that may not have always given a clear direction of travel, but one that left a nice trail of breadcrumbs to continue me on my pursuit of knowledge. In short, I graduated with my bachelors of arts degree, started a career in Corporate America, discovered money was not my driving force, and quieted my inner dialogue and the outer world to ask myself what it is I truly valued in life. One theme remained true throughout: community. This is my pursuit of combining what remains true and that which I have learned along the way - how to pursue change with a collective mindset.

I was born and raised in Las Vegas, Nevada where I pursued my bachelors degree at the University of Nevada Las Vegas. I majored in communication studies, originally in hopes of helping my family learn to deal with conflict in a healthy manner. I quickly discovered much of the world struggled with this as well. I grew up in a small world, one that was centered around family. The outside world existed but was vastly unknown. My parents did not attend college so this new chapter broadened all of our horizons; yet, the real catalyst for my growth was my venture abroad in Madrid, Spain. I saw the world through a new lens - a lens that asked me many questions that I did not have the answers to but knew without a doubt I wanted to find them. I learned once I allowed my world to grow it could never neatly fit in the same box it once did. At this time of my life, I thought the destination made me who I was. Within six months of returning to Las Vegas from Spain, I set my sights on Durango, Colorado for an internship with the U.S. Forest Service at the San Juan National Forest.

I say with a lot of gratitude and appreciation that I was fortunate enough to consistently find myself among the right company in life. During my internship I had the opportunity to do field work with the forest engineer of abandoned mine lands. My position, the Volunteer and Partnership Coordinator, did not initially entail this type of work; yet, I went electroshock fishing, collected water samples, and learned how human activity from abandoned mines impacted the overall ecosystem of the San Juans. It was new and exciting work that I did not know was possible. Growing up in Las Vegas and having very minimal experience with nature led me to believe careers that were available to someone like me were those that existed in an office. I did not know resource management was a valued career and would be needed more and more in our changing climate. This newly opened door showed me a world of possibilities for working with the environment. While it did not provide one answer, it left me asking more questions about who I was and where I wanted to continue to grow.

Once I completed my bachelors degree, I was offered a position at Amazon as an Area Manager. I had no idea what this role consisted of but soon enough I found myself in the belly of the beast. The work required long hours of data analysis, reallocating resources and relationship management. A major project I completed was the establishment of a set rate for the site's most labor-intensive path. Over the course of four months, I analyzed data from over 260 associates and performed a takt time study to learn the process and understand any barriers that impeded an efficient hour. The project saved my site \$84,000 monthly and was adopted network-wide.

The most meaningful impact I made to Amazon could not be measured in cost reduction or increased efficiencies but was focused on my associates. Throughout my tenure at Amazon, I oversaw five hundred associates, each with their own unique story. Often these stories were difficult to hold and made each issue mine to bear; and while I recognized I was not the doer of deed in most of their worlds, I had the opportunity to change the direction their day was going and provide them solace where there was none. Each difficult conversation allowed me to demonstrate compassion and empathy for a population of people who worked tirelessly to accomplish their daily goal.

In May of 2023, I parted ways with Amazon in hopes of finding a career that aligned more closely with the values that truly matter to me; values such as: servant leadership, transparent communication, and balance. Shortly after leaving Amazon, I stumbled upon The Center for Sustainable Infrastructure and was hired as their Knowledge Exchange Coordinator. After working with CSI for a few months I learned a new concept: industrial symbiosis. It was not until I started to examine industry outside of a personal lens did I realize how deeply its roots had been ingrained in me from Amazon. Industry is growing and it is growing fast - rather than fighting it, we can build bridges between business and sustainability. Through my Masters of Environmental Studies, I hope to help industry find alternative methods to petroleum for packaging materials. I do not know what that end-all adventure looks like just yet, but I hope with more technical knowledge and a broader pool of relationships, I can continue to follow the breadcrumbs wherever they lead.

Sincerely,
Alexa Martin Del Campo