

Soon after graduating from college, my life was changed by the back-to-back historical events that shaped 2020. The culmination of the global social justice movement sparked by the killing of George Floyd, a series of unprecedented mega-fires that turned the sky red, and the onset of the pandemic, which put the world at a standstill, all sparked a period of self-reflection for me. I realized that these events do not happen on a healthy planet and was beginning to recognize the intersectionality between social and environmental justice. The health and prosperity of our planet have always pulled at my heartstrings, and it was during these extraordinary events, more than ever, that I felt a profound call to action to fight the climate crisis for the well-being of both people and the planet. I realized that this was not only a professional aspiration but also a moral imperative for me. This realization inspired me to pivot my career path from a music background and embark on a journey that embraces my commitment to addressing climate change. Through Evergreen's MES program, I aim to transform my passion for sustainability and community resilience into innovative solutions for tackling environmental challenges.

Growing up in an Asian multicultural, multi-generational household, I was immersed in values of interdependence, responsibility, and care for family and community. These traditional values have profoundly shaped my perspective on stewardship, emphasizing our innate connection and responsibility to one another and our environment. Having my heritage connect deeply to my strong environmental ethics has made me a committed advocate for marginalized people disproportionately affected by the climate crisis. By pursuing a master's in environmental studies, I aim to deepen my ability to contribute to community-centered environmental solutions that honor this sense of interconnectedness and responsibility.

Originally, when entering college as a freshman, I was drawn to the transformative potential of music therapy to help people navigate challenges and improve their well-being. This drive to help others shaped my early academic and career goals. After obtaining my BA in music and a minor in Education and Social Justice, I slowly transitioned to an environmentally focused career by gaining work experience where I lacked formal education. I obtained a position at Bellingham's Nooksack Salmon Enhancement Association (NSEA), focusing on salmon habitat restoration projects, community education, and outreach programs. This position gave me insight into the critical intersection of community involvement and ecological health. I led weekly interactive school field trips and community work parties and taught habitat restoration workshops. My work also involved collecting samples, recording data from healthy salmon habitats, and teaching the importance of salmon as a keystone species for our communities and ecosystems. Learning about the Indigenous cultural significance of salmon in the Pacific Northwest, I gained a better understanding of environmental issues through a scientific lens and a cultural and community-focused perspective. Witnessing how collective environmental action fosters connections between people and deepens cultural appreciation was one of my favorite aspects of working at NSEA. With the help of dedicated volunteers and in partnership with Whatcom Land Trust and the Native Plant Society, we planted 10,000 plants near salmon-bearing streams, experimenting with drought and heat-tolerable tree species to support salmon habitat. Through these restoration efforts, I was introduced to real-world applications of environmental theories that helped me bridge the gap between academic

concepts and tangible outcomes. Evergreen's MES program will allow me to continue to expand my interdisciplinary understanding of ecological, social, and cultural dimensions of environmental issues.

Building on this foundation, I served six months living and working at Utah's American Conservation Experience (ACE) program as an AmeriCorps Crew Member, contributing to various conservation projects in and around Zion National Park. Through insights on long-term projects in habitat restoration, trail maintenance, and public land conservation, I gained sustainable land-use practices and valuable insight on how to balance public recreation with conservation goals. Partnering with state agencies like the Bureau of Land Management and the National Parks Service exposed me to large-scale environmental management frameworks, policies, and interagency cooperation. The personal growth I gained in Utah, as well as being deeply immersed in physically demanding and intense conservation efforts, gave me a broader perspective on conservation planning and implementation. The required mental toughness, discipline, and problem-solving skills needed for working in the often remote and extreme weather conditions of Utah will no doubt benefit me in Evergreen's graduate research and fieldwork. Working for ACE solidified my passion for conservation and fueled my desire to gain the advanced knowledge necessary to further my career in this field and make a greater impact. I am excited to continue to expand my networking and collaboration with environmental professionals and agencies.

While my undergraduate GPA does not fully reflect my current academic capabilities, it represents a period of personal and educational growth during which I faced struggles with undiagnosed ADHD. Addressing these challenges taught me time management, work-life balance, and resilience, qualities I have since honed through my sincere efforts to optimize my organizational strategies and focus. I am confident that my dedication to personal growth, coupled with my passion for learning about environmental challenges, will enable me to thrive in your rigorous master's program.

In a world where so many environmental and social injustices interlace, our greatest task is to bridge science and community together to create equitable solutions that heal our world. Evergreen is dedicated to this mission. The MES program cultivates students competent enough to solve complex environmental issues and perfectly aligns with my dedication to addressing our biggest social and ecological concerns. Securing attendance in this program would help me achieve my career goals of restoring ecosystems and biodiversity and providing marginalized communities with the tools and knowledge they need to improve their capacity to mitigate the impacts of climate change. I look forward to the opportunity to join this program and grow alongside peers and faculty dedicated to the posterity of our planet and an equitable future.