

Example Application Essay

I learned of the Great Pacific Garbage Patch last year while volunteering at a beach clean-up event. I was devastated to learn how plastics in our ocean impact marine life. For example, sea turtles mistake plastic bags for jellyfish and eat them and albatrosses mistake plastic resin pellets for fish eggs and feed them to their chicks¹. I was further shocked to learn that most of the debris comes from land-based activities in North America and Asia¹. I thought back to the last beach trip with my family. Did we pick up all our trash? Had a zip lock bag or water bottle been left behind or blown away by a gust of wind?

Since that volunteer event I've been extra careful to make sure all of my trash and recyclables are properly disposed of, but I'm still left with the feeling that there is more I can do. This issue needs action on a global scale! Unfortunately, it is difficult to rally public attention to this matter because this gigantic vortex of garbage consists almost entirely of teeny tiny bits of plastics generally invisible to the naked eye. Even satellite imagery doesn't show the giant patch of garbage¹.

The enormity of the problem, as well as the lack of public attention on the matter, will make cleaning up the Great Pacific Garbage Patch tremendously difficult. While there are many things we can do on an individual level – reduce single-use plastic consumption, avoid products with microbeads, bring reusable bags to the grocery store and travel mugs to the coffee shop² – we also need legislation and incentives that help manufacturers and businesses transition from toxic, disposable plastics to biodegradable materials¹ and cutting edge technologies that can safely remove existing debris from the open ocean and turn the trash into useful materials³. I am ready to take the next step in my education and gain the knowledge and skills I need to contribute to the design and implementation of these solutions.

Completing Cascadia's Bachelor of Applied Science degree in Sustainable Practices will help me better understand complex sustainability problems such as the Great Pacific Garbage Patch which continues to grow as I write this essay⁴. From the company who chooses non-biodegradable plastics for a short-term boost to their bottom line, to the subsistence fisherman thousands of miles away who becomes ill from eating contaminated fish, this is truly a global issue that merits our immediate attention. I would be thrilled to be part of a program that addresses the ecological and social impacts of our most pressing sustainability issues, such as the Great Pacific Garbage Patch, and opens doors to the political, ecological, economic and technological process and resources available to resolve them.

Upon earning a Bachelor of Applied Science degree in Sustainable Practices from Cascadia College, I aspire to complete a Masters of Business Administration and join the sustainability team of a national or global company such as Amazon. In such a position, I would be able to help corporate leaders transition to more environmentally friendly practices, such as replacing Styrofoam peanuts with biodegradable packing materials. My hope is that by helping a large, well known company successfully lead the way, other companies across the globe will eventually follow suit and that one day, many of the problems we once thought were too big to solve – ozone depletion, oceanic pollution, climate change – will become concerns of the past and a prosperous, healthy, and sustainable future for all will prevail.

References

- 1) National Geographic Society. (n.d.). Retrieved December 6, 2016 from <http://nationalgeographic.org/encyclopedia/great-pacific-garbage-patch/>
- 2) P Newman and A Crawley. (2015, April 30). Fishing for Plastic: Science in the Great Pacific Garbage Patch. Retrieved from <https://ocean.si.edu/blog/fishing-plastic-science-great-pacific-garbage-patch>
- 3) J Layton. (2010, February 04). Could we clean up the Great Pacific Garbage Patch? HowStuffWorks.com. Retrieved from <http://science.howstuffworks.com/environmental/green-science/clean-up-garbage-patch1.htm>
- 4) (2016, October 04). Great Pacific garbage patch far bigger than imagined, aerial survey shows. The Guardian. Retrieved from <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2016/oct/04/great-pacific-garbage-patch-ocean-plastic-trash>

Example Skills-Based Resume

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EDUCATION

Cascadia College, Bothell, WA
Associate in Integrated Studies

Graduated June 2017

SKILLS AND EXPERIENCE

Organization/Coordination

- Organized and led a half-day field trip to the Bellevue Art Museum for eight students and one faculty advisor
- Reviewed expense requests per state guidelines; tracked and reported on annual budget
- Project managed a group presentation on the future of electric vehicles

Technological Competencies

- Highly skilled in Microsoft Office including Word, Excel, Access and Publisher
- Moderately skilled in Adobe Suite including Acrobat, Photoshop, Illustrator and InDesign

Customer Service

- Provided exceptional service to restaurant patrons in fast-paced environment
- Assisted clients with product selection, purchases and returns
- Resolved customer concerns and elevated issues to management as appropriate

Field Work

- Removed debris from beach habitats, sorted collected materials and disposed of waste per county specifications
- Cleared brush from back-country trails and posted educational signage

EMPLOYMENT HISTORY

Sales Associate, Banana Republic – Seattle, WA
Server and Hostess, Red Robin – Woodinville, WA

September 2014 - Present
January 2011 – June 2014

LEADERSHIP AND COMMUNITY SERVICE

Treasurer, Cascadia Art Club – Bothell, WA
Volunteer, Coastal Clean-up – Des Moines, WA
Volunteer, Washington Trails Alliance – Mount Rainier, WA

September 2015 – Present
August 2013, 2014, 2015 and 2016
July 2014