



Washington State University

December Grad Ryan Ward

Home
 Contact Us
 Tribal Liaison Office
 Native Student Center
 Native Grad Student Center
 Outreach & Recruitment
 Plateau Center
 Leadership Program
 Newsletter
 Events Calendar
 Resources

Ryan Ward Finds Success at WSU by Prioritizing and Getting Involved

by Edmund "Frazer" Myer

"It's been a long process and I'm really going to miss the people here, but I'm ready to be done," Ryan Ward said.

In December, after four-and-a-half years as a student at Washington State University, Ward earned his bachelor's degree in history and walked in the 2015 Fall Commencement.

Ward, 23, is back in his hometown of Castle Rock, Washington. Castle Rock is a city of about 2,000 residents located in Cowlitz County, where Ward said he enjoys fishing, hunting, and going out on his canoe.

Now back in his community, and in the process of starting a career in firefighting, Ward is also looking to get more involved with his tribe, the Cowlitz. Having pride in his heritage is something he acquired early on in life. He can remember attending tribal meetings since he was eight years old.

The adjustment from his small hometown to Pullman was a challenge for Ward. Living in a new environment where there were a lot of things going on caused him to struggle academically his freshman year, Ward said. He quickly learned that he needed to prioritize.

"It helped me grow as a person, I was just young and needed to learn what it takes to be a good student," he said.

Ward was on the rowing team here at WSU, but had to step away to focus more on academics. When ready to get involved again on campus, Ward became a member of the Ku-Ah-Mah Native American student organization.

Eventually becoming the Co-Chair of Ku-Ah-Mah, Ward said that the opportunity allowed him to work on some of his weaknesses. Prior to joining the group he didn't feel comfortable talking in front of people, but after speaking at a few budget hearings, he realized that it wasn't as bad as he expected.

"Putting yourself in those situations to gain experience and confidence is what being a WSU student and being a part of a club is all about," Ward said.

His advice for a freshman coming in next year is to, "Get involved, don't just sit back and say you're part of a club, actually try to do things."

"You learn a lot if you actually participate in club activities," said Ward. "I learned how to be a better person. It teaches you a lot about yourself."



Ryan Ward, Cowlitz, received his bachelor's degree in history this past December.

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