



Paul Rowley

Portland State University

Age: 27

Year: Junior

Major: Political Science

Goal: to work for a Northwest Native American fishing tribe in a leadership position

Paul Rowley saw a practical need to pursue his degree after working in social work for years, and realizing that increased knowledge and know-how would allow him to make the kind of difference he wants to make improving the lives of Northwest Native American people. Paul is a first generation college student and dove into the work world shortly after graduating from high school, where he worked for years in social services for homeless youth. He was motivated to gain the tools of a higher education after he and others took the initiative to start a union drive to organize labor at his company, a four-year campaign in which he took a leadership role. The campaign was successful, but upon completion, he realized just how much more could be done. His achievement inspired him toward the prospect of more affecting more change, and taking on more professional responsibility. Paul is now married with an infant son and balances the responsibilities and expenses of college with those of a family. He has attended either PSU or PCC summer school every year in order to graduate in four years, but even with the assistance of grants and scholarships, he will accrue considerable student loan debt by graduation day. He has been very resourceful in arriving at creative ways to afford his education: he makes fishing nets and sells or trades them with fisherman in the Columbia Gorge, holds a work study job, and uses his culinary skills to cook for special events, all while enrolled in a full-time academic schedule. His education is an integral tool to his dreams, and Paul is committed to maintain his "place and role within" the tribal community while in college. He stays as culturally involved as possible, and says that the PSU Native American Community Center helps him to maintain and further his community connections and commitments.