DEMystifying the Personal and Diversity Statements in Graduate School Applications

09.12.2018
Dr. Denzil A. Streete
Office for Graduate Student Development and Diversity

Yale Graduate School of Arts and Sciences
What We Will Cover Today

Components of the Graduate School Application
Letters of Recommendation
The Personal Statement
The Diversity Statement
Future Webinars
Questions
Components of the Graduate School Application
Components of the PhD Application

The Online Application: Demographic and Institutional Information

Personal Statement

Transcript(s)

Diversity Statement

Letters of Recommendation

GRE score(s)

CV/Resume

Special Requirements: writing sample, book review, etc.
LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION

Recommenders submit their letters of recommendation for you online. Once you identify a recommender they will receive an email providing instructions and access information.

- **Categories**
  - Academic performance
  - Intellectual potential
  - Motivation for proposed area of study

- **Possible Rankings**
  - Lowest 50%
  - Top 50%
  - Top 25%
  - Top 5%
  - Truly Exceptional
PERSONAL STATEMENT

- Emphasize
  - Past work
  - Preparation for intended field of study
  - Relevant background and interests
  - Academic plans
  - Career objectives
PERSONAL STATEMENT

- Formulate a thoughtful, compelling and persuasive presentation of your own personal story
- It should be a response to specific questions or requested information
- It should hold the reader’s interest
PERSONAL STATEMENT

- **How to begin**
  a. Imagine that you have 5 minutes with someone from the Admissions Committee
  b. How would you go about making the best case for yourself while holding the listener’s interest?
  c. What would you include and omit in your story?
PERSONAL STATEMENT

You

Your Experiences

Your Goals
PERSONAL STATEMENT

- Why am I choosing to attend Graduate School?
- Why am I interested in (specific field)?
- Why did I choose to apply to this particular Graduate School?
- What are my specific qualifications?
- What is special, unique, or impressive about my life story?
PERSONAL STATEMENT

- **Tips**
  - Avoid clichés and unfamiliar acronyms.
  - Do not plagiarize.
  - Organize your thoughts.
  - Have a strong and original introduction, and ending.
  - Do not repeat at length information in a CV or resume.
  - Stay *upbeat*. 
The Personal Statement

What should the Personal Statement cover?
- Background Information: Keep it brief and relevant
- Your motivation for pursuing a PhD
- Academic/Research Experience: highlight and explain the significance of your qualifications. Don’t replicate the CV
- Your broader goals and motivations
- Other areas or issues arising from your CV
- Create base template; customize for each school/program
The Diversity Statement

How would your prior experience(s) aid in, and contribute to, the diverse learning community at Institution X?

- Experiences or events that help(ed) shape your understanding of diversity and inclusion
- How have you incorporated elements of diversity/equity/inclusion in your research or co-curricular activities?
- How your understanding of these issues impact your future research and involvement in the community you are seeking to join?
- How do elements of your identity inform your outlook?
Upcoming Webinars

October 8, 2018
3:00PM EST
Chemistry @ Yale

October 30, 2018
3:00PM EST
Graduate Admissions at Yale

November 1, 2018
5:00PM EST
Geology/Geophysics @ Yale

November 7, 2018
3:00PM EST
Yale Combined Program in the Biological and Biomedical Sciences (BBS)

November 28, 2018
3:00PM EST
SURF and the Value of Summer Research

December 10, 2018
3:00PM EST
PREP and Considering Post-Baccalaureate Programs
gsas.yale.edu/diversity
Questions?
@denstreeete
ogsdd@yale.edu