



Examples of Successful Personal Statements

Statement #1 – Psychology

Several experiences have stimulated my commitment to psychology. The first is the fact that my mother is diagnosed schizophrenic. As a child I did not understand why her behavior was so different from other adults. Her behavior prompted my curiosity involving the development, duration, and treatment of schizophrenia. At an early age I gained insight about how society is not always accepting of those persons who are "unusual" or "abnormal". She is a high functioning person who is in an institution. I felt there had to be alternative ways to deal with her behaviors than to put her away from a close supportive family.

A second experience involves my academic background. The knowledge I have gained from class material and applied experience has inspired a desire to come to a more in depth understanding of psychological phenomena. This phenomena including the manifestation of mental illness and the adaptation difficulties associated with mental abnormalities. I have financed approximately ninety percent of my education in my quest for said psychological knowledge.

In the upcoming semester I will be gaining more experience in the research and teaching aspects of psychology. My research experience will be supervised under Dr. Osman. I will be involved in the conceptualization, data collection, data analysis, and report writing within the research areas of pain, anxiety, and suicide. Also I will be a teaching assistant for Dr. Whitsett in a research methods course. I will be responsible for implementing understanding of the material and the processes involved in five students form a class of twenty. I will be guiding their writing of a bibliography and a proposal. I expect to gain more experience for myself in understanding the research process for later use in graduate school and beyond.

My practicum at the Battered Women's Shelter enlightened my understanding of interpersonal interaction and how different individuals deal with crisis situations in their own unique ways. I observed a minimal part of male-female relations within the realm of violence. This including how the development of the male versus the female gendered personalities can affect overt as well as covert behavior in adult interpersonal interaction.

The third experience was a difficult one. It involved a friend who was a substance abuser. While using these psychoactive substances he displayed cognitive and behavioral problems. The time duration of his abuse and termination of use of these drugs was an educational period for me. I observed in him the behavior, affect, and cognitive aspects I had learned in my academic courses. I have an interest in how drug abuse is psychologically and sociologically oriented and how preventative measures can be implemented.

At this time my special interests include schizophrenia, substance abuse, and social psychological factors in interpersonal interaction, especially that of male-female relations involving the attitudes held by both men and women and society's perpetuation of status quo relationship structures. I am determined to explore these research areas and hope to expand upon the knowledge base of the precipitating factors and the treatment strategies after diagnosis.

Long-range objectives in pursuing advanced study of psychology include the various areas of research application. These include teaching as a professor in a university setting, research, consultation, and private practice. I intend to use my knowledge and expertise obtained at the University of Iowa to further the research areas of schizophrenia, substance abuse, and interpersonal interactions involving social psychological aspects with research and practice. The University of Iowa has a strong emphasis in research and this would be beneficial to my research interests in that I would be given ample opportunity to explore and expand upon my areas of study within the clinical program.

I aspire to be one of the multitude of researchers who participate in the prevention and treatment of substance abuse, schizophrenia, and adaptation difficulties involving daily relations between individuals

Statement #2 – Literature Studies

Having majored in literary studies (world literature) as an undergraduate, I would now like to concentrate on English and American literature.

I am especially interested in nineteenth-century literature, women's literature, Anglo-Saxon poetry, and folklore and folk literature. My personal literary projects have involved some combination of these subjects. For the oral section of my comprehensive exams, I specialized in nineteenth century novels by and about women. The relationship between "high" and folk literature became the subject for my honors essay, which examined Toni Morrison's use of classical, biblical, African, and Afro-American folk tradition in her novel. I plan to work further on this essay, treating Morrison's other novels and perhaps preparing a paper suitable for publication.

In my studies toward a doctoral degree, I hope to examine more closely the relationship between high and folk literature. My junior year and private studies of Anglo-Saxon language and literature have caused me to consider the question of where the divisions between folklore, folk literature,

and high literature lie. Should I attend your school, I would like to resume my studies of Anglo-Saxon poetry, with special attention to its folk elements.

Writing poetry also figures prominently in my academic and professional goals. I have just begun submitting to the smaller journals with some success and am gradually building a working manuscript for a collection. The dominant theme of this collection relies on poems that draw from classical, biblical, and folk traditions, as well as everyday experience, in order to celebrate the process of giving and taking life, whether literal or figurative. My poetry draws from and influences my academic studies. Much of what I read and study finds a place in my creative work as subject. At the same time, I study the art of literature by taking part in the creative process, experimenting with the tools used by other authors in the past.

In terms of a career, I see myself teaching literature, writing criticism, and going into editing or publishing poetry. Doctoral studies would be valuable to me in several ways. First, your teaching assistant ship program would provide me with the practical teaching experience I am eager to acquire. Further, earning a Ph.D. in English and American literature would advance my other two career goals by adding to my skills, both critical and creative, in working with language. Ultimately, however, I see the Ph.D. as an end in itself, as well as a professional stepping stone; I enjoy studying literature for its own sake and would like to continue my studies on the level demanded by the Ph.D. program.



Statement #3 – Liberal Arts Program

Poor communication helped me find my calling in life. One memorable misunderstanding in my early years of school helped shape my perspective about teaching and learning, and eventually ignited a passionate search for the "how-to's" of communication.

Growing up, I found education to be dissatisfying and often brutal. Having come from a family that was lukewarm about it--my father was a dropout and my mother's educational peak was nursing school--I didn't feel strongly about any kind of learning. The only area that I was actually interested in was writing; it was the one medium in which I felt comfortable, although I was initially a poor writer. As my skills began to improve, however, I started to share my work with teachers. I thought all was going well until one English teacher misinterpreted my response to a personification essay as a suicide warning. She called the principal, who then called my mother, and the situation escalated out of control. It turns out that the "suicide note" wasn't a plea for help after all--just a young student experimenting with different shades of description. When the fuss died down, though, I found that I had lost interest in communicating with my instructors. Why should I bother to write if my words caused teachers to respond with alarm?

Although still wary of school, I eventually began community college, but was frustrated with the fragmented community of students and educators. I came close to quitting many times--I had toyed with the idea of continuing my education, perhaps going into the field of writing, but I couldn't bear the thought of spending years in such an empty environment. It wasn't until I reached Belmont Abbey College that I realized how much I could enjoy learning: The students in my classes were interesting, the teachers were demanding yet attentive, and for the first time I was acknowledged for my writing skills--people actually liked what I had to say, and because they were so encouraging and receptive, I blossomed. Soon after, I became a voracious student. I read everything I could get my hands on, asked endless questions in class, and got to know my professors. My appetite for knowledge led me to investigate the area of communications, and as a result, I've become fascinated with the processes of writing and learning: Because of my experiences, I realize how important it is for students to communicate effectively, and how important it is for teachers to be receptive to this communication. A breakdown in the pathway either leads to students who don't care about learning or writing, or teachers who don't connect with their students or mistake creativity with personal tragedy. My professional objective, as a result of my exposure to these types of discordant relationships, is to help facilitate the link between teacher and student so no one gets lost in the process.

This is where the Texts and Technology program comes in. By deconstructing and reexamining how we communicate, whether written or verbal communication, we can evaluate the effectiveness of our own learning and teaching processes. With this knowledge, we become better instructors and better students, and, ideally, more responsive to weaknesses within the "system." If the teacher I had, for example, had access to a database of student essays dealing with personification, she might have realized that my response wasn't as bleak as she'd originally thought. Or, if she had a network of other instructors to discuss her concerns with, she may have ended up learning something about writing herself, thus becoming a better instructor. On the other hand, had I been able to communicate with students from other schools, other disciplines, other educational levels, I might have had a different outlook about education altogether.

With the marriage of technology and traditional classroom learning, the possibilities are endless. My own vision is to create a national network of students, authors and teachers from all writing disciplines--composition, poetry, expository writing, fiction, creative-non fiction, magazine writing--so the scholarly community can be strengthened through connection. Imagine the novice writing student having access to an online forum where established writers hold scheduled chats. The same student might even be able to get feedback on his/her work from any number of instructors at universities around the nation, or even the world. While not intended to replace the traditional classroom, certainly technology-infused education such as this would help students feel like a part of something larger, a part of the ongoing academic discourse, instead of perceiving themselves as components of a static entity. Ultimately I feel that the union of technology and scholastics will help create a community that offers both inspiration and refuge to students and educators. The Texts and Technology program, as an educational vanguard, can help construct this reality.

Statement #4 – Business School (MBA)

As a child I often accompanied my father to his small coin shop and spent hours watching him work. When I was older, I sometimes set up displays, waited on customers, and even balanced the

books. This experience instilled in me the desire to own and manage my own business someday, yet I understand that the business world today is more complex. This complexity requires more education, and with that in mind, I am applying to the Master's of Business Administration program at Big Business School.

In addition to my helping out in my father's business, I have had numerous other work experiences that further enhance my qualifications for this program. My resume enumerates the various positions I have held at Kerasotes Theaters, Chili's restaurants, and my college's new Student Recreational Sports Center (SRSC), and what all of these positions have in common is an emphasis on serving the public effectively. Further, as an assistant manager at the Showplace 11 and a staff coordinator at the SRSC, I have gained valuable expertise in managing employees and creating work schedules. Both of these positions have allowed me to develop my sales and people skills, which are extremely important in an increasingly service-driven marketplace.

Not all of my work experience has been as a paid employee. Part of my volunteering experience at Middleway House, the local battered women's shelter, involved extensive work on computers, including word processing, organizing databases and creating spreadsheets. Also, I recently participated in an internship program for academic credit with the Eli Lilly Corporation in the personnel division. As a management intern, I was able to watch the workings of a major corporation up close and would like the opportunity to combine my experiences with the theoretical background available in the MBA program at Big Business School, with its emphasis on computers, marketing and human resources.

My successful internship is one element of my overall academic success as an undergraduate here at Belmont Abbey College, yet I have also made time for a variety of extracurricular activities, including working for my sorority and competing in intramural basketball. My positive experiences here have resulted in my desire to stay in Charlotte to continue my academic endeavors; furthermore, continuing my education here would allow me to make important business contacts, with the career goal of opening my own computer consulting firm in the Southeast.

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