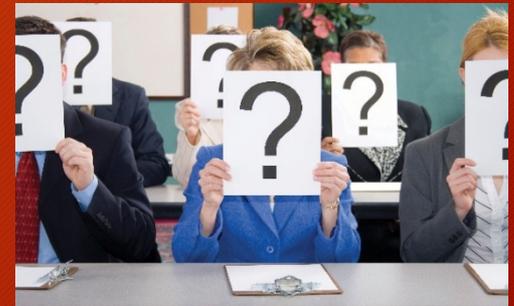


# Personal Statement Workshop

Lolita Wood-Hill

# The Basics

- Two pages, double spaced.
- Follow instructions!
- Put your name and LSAC number in the top right hand corner of the first page.
- No gimmicks, pictures or cover pages
- Remember your audience is likely:
  - Over the age of 35
  - Not your parent/friend
  - Likely has religious/political/cultural views different than yours!



# Personal Statement

A written statement of no more than two typed pages, double-spaced, is required. The statement should inform the Admissions Committee of any factors the applicant deems relevant to the admissions decision.

- personal and family matters;
- educational background, talents and experiences;
- or reasons for applying to law school as they may relate to your personal or professional goals.
- Most schools also allow you to submit an addendum. This should be used to explain how your background, experiences, personal goals will add to the class. It may also be used to explain grades or test scores that you feel require explanation. An example would be someone whose native language or background might have been from another country and how that has shaped you as a person.

# Purpose

- The personal statement takes the place of a personal interview
- Brings your application to life
- Sets you apart from your peers
- It **CAN** make a big difference

# What is the Goal?

- Persuade the admissions committee that you will be an asset to the incoming class and will be a good fit for the school.
- Motivate the reader to act on your behalf
- Demonstrate that you are a terrific writer.

# Show Don't Tell

- Tell a story that allows the admissions committee to infer that you will be a welcome addition to the class.
- You **MUST** have a central theme and ensure that all paragraphs relate back to that central theme.
- Example- I am someone who has always been motivated to remedy social injustice
  - Story from when you were in the third grade
  - How did this develop as you matured?
  - 1-2 examples of activities/initiative you became involved with *in college*
  - Conclusion--Law school would give me the skills to put my passion to good use.

# Common Pitfalls

- The Resume Essay
- Humor/gimmicks
- Writing in letter format
- Saying I've always wanted to be a lawyer - **BORING!**
- Save the world essays
- Statement of purpose essays or slapping on a statement of purpose at the end of a personal statement
- Inserting the name of the wrong law school!
- Overly intellectual statements that are not personal
- Wasting space on lengthy quotes- *each line is prime real estate!*
- Using lawyerly or overly verbose language—
  - “The resplendent sun beamed down on me, obfuscating my view of the verdurous mountain range.”  
*Big words don't impress!*
- Writing about someone or something else  
*it's not about mom or Moses- it's about YOU!*

# Pointers

- Be specific, little details can add a lot of flavor
- Be yourself
- Get personal
- Talk about yourself as a human being as opposed to your accomplishments
- Don't forget about the writing

# Getting Started

- Brainstorm
- Free write for 15-20 minutes about a couple of the prompts below
  - personal and family matters;
  - educational background, talents and experiences;
  - or reasons for applying to law school as they may relate to your personal or professional goals.
- Formulate an idea and clear it with the Pre-Law Adviser and/or Dr. Sugarman
- Draft an outline (structure is really important)
- Start writing

# Personal Inventory Questions

## About You

What makes you unique?

What attracts you to law?

When did you decide on law as a career?

What solidified this decision?

What are your intellectual influences? Writers, books, professors that have shaped you?

## About What You've Done

What accomplishments have most prepared you for law school?

What non-academic experiences have most prepared you?

What are your goals after law school?

What's the most important thing admissions should know about you?

## Your Academics

Why your major?

What research have you done? What did you learn?

How has your academic experiences prepared you for law school and the profession?

What is most impressive about your academic accomplishments?

# You are not Alone

- Writing Center
- Office of Pre-Law Advising
- Dr. Sugarman
- Career Center

