

R&E: Personal Statement Workshop

- Meeting starts at 5:10 PM
- What is the personal statement
 - pharmCAS opens in mid-July
 - Main essay that shows who you are beyond your GPA and test scores
 - Shows what drives you to achieve these goals
 - 4500 characters including spaces
 - Will be sent to all schools you apply to
- Recommended to start thinking/writing about your personal statement maybe even as early as beginning of year
- During your time in college: start compiling your experiences, what you did, what you learned, how are you different now from last year?
- A personal statement is NOT:
 - A list of experiences (there is another section for this)
 - Not your resume, or journey into medicine (in a way that you list it)
 - Way to criticize any health field or practitioner (I did not want to become a doctor because...)
- SHOW, DON'T TELL
- Ask yourself these questions to get started
 - Why do you want to be in this profession? Why don't you pursue becoming a doctor/nurse/PA instead?
 - What kind of provider do you want to be?
 - How are you qualified? What can you bring to the school/the workforce
 - What do you aspire to be in the future?
 - What drives you to help people?
 - Who do you want to help and why?
 - What qualities do you have that you see are important in becoming a pharmacist?
- Sit down and think about these above questions
- Take writing classes seriously, practice your skills
- Don't be shy to ask your UWP professor to help you proofread
- Maybe focus on choosing a theme (chronological, categorical)
- Look up core competencies, see which ones align with you
 - <https://students-residents.aamc.org/applying-medical-school/article/core-competencies/>
 - Leadership, teamwork, cultural competency, empathy, etc
- Pharmacy schools want to see you:
 - As a person who knows their limits and is willing to go above and beyond
 - Someone who can learn from their mistakes
 - Has the capacity to learn and seek knowledge

- Look up those AAMC core competencies
 - For supplementals, look up the school's values and really try to align yours
- Someone who will not easily burn out and knows work-life balance
- All of us have the above qualities to some extent! Be proud of what you have done and don't be afraid to show off within reason.
- The truth
 - Pharmacy schools will get their first look at you as a person through your personal statement
 - Think about your reader
 - Healthcare professional working 40+ hours a week, they will only read your statement maybe once quickly
 - How can you really catch their attention?
 - How can you differentiate yourself from other people?
 - Getting accepted for an interview is more difficult than being accepted after your interview
- Try not to do these:
 - I want to be part of the solution, not that you will be the solution.
 - Don't speak negatively about anything
 - If you are writing about a time you had a conflict, don't put the blame on a person, try to find common ground or try to understand multiple points of view
 - Brag about yourself, but do not overdo it, still show some humility
- Try these exercises
 - Number 1-14, write out any and every experience you have done since graduating high school
 - Can be a single day experience, anything impactful to you (e.g. volunteering at a vaccination clinic)
 - Talk to your friends about serious topics, what do you want to be in the future, etc, where do you see yourself in 10 years, what is your opinion of our current healthcare, what are we doing wrong
- When writing
 - Focus on a few key experiences that really defined you, or taught you the most about not just yourself but beyond
 - Practice makes perfect, aim for as many drafts as you can
 - Ask anybody to read it!
 - If they are able to see who you are and what you value, then you know you succeeded
 - When writing about your experiences, keep it short to one or two sentences and really focus on big impact

- Then focus writing more on what you learned or how this shows that you have a certain skill
 - You can write about anything
 - Example: a waitress job and pharmacy
 - Don't be focused on writing beautifully, stay concise and to the point, use big impact words.
 - I understood, learned, I contributed greatly
- Prompt 4500 word limit (INCLUDING SPACES)
 - Your Personal Essay should address why you selected pharmacy as a career and how the Doctor of Pharmacy degree relates to your immediate and long-term professional goals. Describe how your personal, educational, and professional background will help you achieve your goals. The personal essay is an important part of your application for admission and provides you with an opportunity to clearly and effectively express your ideas.
- Quick Notes by James
 - What is your theme?
 - Make it flow like a story, not choppy paragraphs put together
 - It's ok for the first draft to be messy and choppy, just write in your backyard, at the beach, etc
 - Write on paper, comp, etc
 - Redraft and refine later
 - Get the content down first, don't worry about how it sounds yet
 - Make an outline
 - After you get the content down, which ones work better?
 - Do not try to add so much, pick a few attributes and add details once you know what you want to talk about
 - Set deadlines. When do you want your first draft done by? He had 13 drafts. His friend had 20.
 - Good writing gets your message across, not your vocabulary or word choice
 - Look over supplements to make sure you have diff content for each essay (experiences could overlap but you should be using diff stories or examples)
 - Take everything one step at a time
 - Be careful what you talk about; you don't know who is reading it
 - Be yourself and genuine
 - Sometimes the experience that don't seem to "fit" may be the best one because they can be unique and diff from the rest of applicants