

ASSIGNMENT: STATEMENT OF PURPOSE BRAINSTORMING EXERCISE

Assigned to Fellows, a one-year program, who were rising graduating seniors (Phase 1 Pilot)

Before beginning the formal writing of your statement of purpose, we would like you to brainstorm about the ideas and examples that you may eventually write about in your statement of purpose. Strong statements of purpose tell a coherent story and contain specific examples that support your claims. In this exercise, we want you to brainstorm about specific episodes or events in your life that you think have shaped who you are today, who you want to become, and what you want to do, in the future. These episodes/events do not have to be dramatic or life changing. They could be any situation, interaction, or experience that helped shape your motivation, perceptions, or attitudes about your life, future, or decisions about your education. The important thing is that these episodes/events illustrate a coherent story about who you are to others – in other words, where you are coming from (past), where you are now (present), and where you are going after graduate school (future).

Part I

For the first part of this brainstorm exercise, recall an early episode/event that you believe helped to affirm your current major or career field of interest. This memory could be from any time in your past— from childhood through your first few years of college. Please describe this episode/event in detail.

What happened, where and when, who was involved, and what were you thinking and feeling? Importantly, describe, in detail, how this memory has shaped your current interests and your future career goals?

Using the prompt above, please draft a paragraph-long response for 2-to-3 different specific memories from your past.

As you are addressing the prompt about specific life episodes in your past, keep in mind how they might connect to where you are now (e.g., your current interests), and where you are going in the future (e.g., career aspirations). This will help in telling a coherent story that conveys a connection to your motivations and future goals.

Part II

Now we would like you to consider your goals for graduate programs and careers. Specifically, think about your short-term and long-term career goals (as you have already listed in your IDP) and how obtaining a graduate degree at this juncture in your life will help you reach these goals. These considerations should lead to the graduate programs that you are thinking of applying to.

Using the prompt above, please draft a paragraph-long response that describes your goals and graduate and program choices.