



CVs, PERSONAL STATEMENTS, AND RESEARCH STATEMENTS

Overview

This workshop will teach strategies for creating a professionally written—yet unique—set of documents that will appeal to admissions, fellowship, or hiring committees. We will focus on genre conventions and organization.

A Note about This Workshop and The Graduate Writing Center

Please note that our series of graduate workshops on writing are designed to address general writing principles. As a result, you may not find information in this packet or during the workshop that is directly relevant to your field or your current study. Consider these workshops as opportunities to gain exposure to general writing skills that should transfer across disciplines. Attending these workshops is **not a substitute** for reading extensively in your field and asking questions of advisors and peers.

The Graduate Writing Center provides free one-on-one peer consultations and interactive workshops for Penn State graduate students of all disciplines and all levels of writing ability at any stage of the writing process across a range of genres: presentations, seminar papers, theses, dissertations, article manuscripts, professional documents, etc.

To learn more about the Graduate Writing Center or to sign up for an appointment using our online schedule, visit <http://composition.la.psu.edu/resources/graduate-writing-center>.

Curricula Vitae (CVs): An Overview

A curriculum vitae or CV is a record of your educational background and academic experiences, often required for job applications, fellowships, grants, and tenure reviews. Like a resume, a CV is designed to showcase your qualifications to a potential academic employer, funding agency, or tenure review board.

What should a CV include?

Most CVs include information about the three-part mission of the university:

- (1) Research
- (2) Teaching
- (3) Service

Although the particular content of your CV may vary according to your particular experiences, your discipline, or your targeted audience, common elements include:

- **Contact information:** name, address, phone number, email

- **Education:** graduate and undergraduate degrees; postdoctoral experience, if relevant.
 - Degree field and other areas of emphasis (i.e., minors)
 - Name and location of school
 - Date degree was conferred (or anticipated graduation date)
 - Title of thesis (under master’s degree information)
 - Title of dissertation (under PhD information); some sources also recommend including a brief description of your dissertation.
 - Names of PhD director and other committee members (optional)
- **Relevant Academic Experience:** most often includes information about research and teaching, but may include other topics, such as publications, presentations, fellowships, grants, assistantships, related coursework, etc.
- **Service:** may include information about academic service, such as assisting with an academic conference, serving on an academic search committee, volunteer work with university institutions, participation with student groups, mentoring, etc.; may also include community service and outreach programs.
- Some CVs may also include information about professional affiliations or memberships, foreign study, or special certificates or licenses.

NOTE: Do NOT include personal information, such as sex, age, race, nationality, marital status. Employers are not allowed to discriminate against you on the basis of any of these.

Exercise 1: “Between the Lines”

No matter how explicit the instructions for academic professional documents may be, there are always requirements or preferences left unexpressed. One of your main tasks is to determine what those “between-the-lines” requirements are through research and critical reading.

Read the following information about a National Science Foundation postdoctoral fellowship in polar-regions research (Part I) and instructions for the personal statement (Part II). Working in groups of 3, answer the following questions:

- (1) What are the **key words** in each part of this fellowship description?
- (2) What can we learn about our readers’ **values, interests, and concerns**?
- (3) What **skills, experiences, and qualities** do they seek in an applicant?
- (4) Given this understanding of our readers, what strategies could a writer use to **tailor** a statement to the readers’ values, interests, and concerns?

Part I. Postdoctoral Fellowships in Polar Regions Research, offered by the Office of Polar Programs (OPP), to support training and research on any aspect of scientific study of Antarctic and/or the Arctic.

The Office of Polar Programs (OPP) offers Postdoctoral Fellowships in Polar Regions Research to highly qualified individuals in U.S. host organizations to support training and research on any aspect of scientific study of the Antarctic and/or the Arctic. The fellowship program develops and trains new

investigators in polar regions research with concomitant goals:

- Support innovative research in emerging areas;
- Encourage interdisciplinary research;
- Foster activities that create broader impacts for science and society; and
- Increase the participation of underrepresented groups in polar regions research.

Fellowships promote human resource development in conjunction with advancing scientific knowledge and understanding and attracting new technologies and expertise to polar regions research. In collaboration with sponsoring scientists, fellowship candidates are encouraged to propose research and training plans that outline opportunities relevant to their career goals, such as developing novel conceptual approaches, enhancing technical skills, gaining field or teaching experience, participating in education and outreach activities, or forming industry partnerships. It is not expected that each fellowship candidate will propose a research and training plan that meets all of the fellowship program goals; rather, candidates should identify activities that contribute their knowledge and skills to the scientific study of polar regions, that foster their research interests and talents, that promote the development of skills and competencies appropriate to their career goals, and that address the merit review criteria identified in this solicitation.

Each candidate must identify the support and commitment of a sponsoring scientist and a U.S. host organization before preparing a fellowship proposal. Co-sponsors and multiple research/training sites are permitted and may be particularly appropriate to pursue collaborative opportunities such as interdisciplinary research, industry partnerships, teaching experiences, or outreach activities. Regardless of the number of sponsoring scientists and research/training sites proposed, a lead sponsor should be identified and a primary host organization must be declared to receive the institutional allowance. The candidate is responsible for making all prior arrangements with the sponsoring scientist(s) and host organization(s).

Part II. A complete postdoctoral fellowship proposal consists of the following:

Project Description, not to exceed 10 single-spaced pages, which must include the following components of the candidate's research and training plan:

- research objectives, methods, and significance;
- training objectives and a personal statement of career goals;
- relation of the proposed research and training plan to the candidate's doctoral thesis and training;
- an explanation of how the described fellowship activities will enhance the candidate's skill development and achievement of career goals;
- justification for the proposed duration of the fellowship, including a timeline of research and other activities that demonstrates the candidate's ability to conclude the project during the fellowship tenure; and
- justification for the choice of sponsoring scientist(s) and host organization(s), including identification of collaborating scientist(s) and mentors, the relation of the proposed work to current research and activities at the host organization(s), and a description of available facilities and resources.
- If the plan includes components such as fieldwork, teaching, undergraduate mentoring, industry collaborations, or outreach, the proposal must state how these activities will be performed during the tenure of the fellowship. Also, proposals with multiple sponsoring scientists and/or research/training sites should identify a lead sponsor and must declare a primary host organization to receive the institutional allowance.

In addition to the information excerpted from the NSF website, how else might applicants get “between-

the-lines” information?

Some suggested CV categories

Education	Professional Background	Conferences Attended	Scholarships
Educational Background	Academic Appointments	Conference Participation	Fellowships
Educational Overview	Teaching Experience	Conference Presentation	Honors and Awards
Academic Background	Professional Summary	Workshop Presentations	Distinctions
Academic Training	Experience Highlights	Convention Addresses	Affiliations
Comprehensive Areas	Research Experience	Invited Lectures	Professional Memberships
Dissertation		Scholarly Presentations	Professional Organizations
	Academic Accomplishments	Programs and Workshops	Professional Certification
Professional Competencies	Professional Achievements	Presentations and publications	Licensure
Course Highlights	Career Highlights	Scholarly publications	Special Training
Areas of Expertise	Administrative Experience	Books	
Graduate Fieldwork	Consulting Experience	Chapters	Study Abroad
Specialized Training	Academic Service	Editorial Boards	International Projects
Internships	Advising	Technical Papers	Languages
Teaching Assistantships	Professional Service	Reviews/Book Reviews	
Research Assistantships	University Involvement	Research Awards	Dossier
Teaching Interests	Outreach	Research Grants	Credentials
Academic Interests	Faculty Leadership	Grants and Contracts	Placement File
Research Interests	Major Committees	Patents	Recommendations
Postdoctoral Experience	National Boards		References

Exercise 2: Organizing your CV

After reading through the job description listed in exercise one, identify categories (see above) that you think should be included in the list? How would you arrange these categories (what order would you put them in)? Why?

Identify categories that you would like to include in your CV. Focus on the requirements of the position you plan to apply for and highlight areas that might be of particular interest to your audience.

Job Descriptions

CVs are less likely than resumes to include lengthy job descriptions in bullets, as most academic job titles (and their duties) are recognizable to the audience. For example, the title “teaching assistant” offers an academic audience enough information to understand your role in that position. However, you may need to include descriptions when your work is not fully explained by the title or reflects unique skills. Job descriptions should be **action driven** and **begin with a verb**. Make sure that verbs beginning each bulleted item are **conjugated in the same tense**.

Some Action Verbs

achieved	acquired	administered	allotted	analyzed	assisted	authored
automated	balanced	budgeted	calculated	completed	controlled	coordinated
conducted	converted	created	decided	delivered	designed	developed
devised	discovered	eliminated	established	eradicated	executed	expanded

figured	grew	headed	helped	identified	implemented	improved
invented	installed	instructed	introduced	initiated	managed	operated
optimized	originated	positioned	prepared	redesigned	researched	restructured
reviewed	revised	saved	selected	streamlined	taught	verified

How can I organize my CV?

Most CVs begin with educational background; the arrangement following education often depends on emphasis. For instance, if you are applying to a research institution, you will want to emphasize your research experience (including publications and presentations), by putting that information first. In general, the closer to the beginning you place your material, the more emphasis it receives.

How should I format my CV?

Resumes should be visually attractive and easy to scan. Consider the following formatting tips:

- Use 10-12 point font.
- Use bulleted lists to help employers locate information easily.
- Limit the number of fonts used and the kind of emphasis (bold, italics)—too many fonts and too much emphasis are distracting and hard to read. Don't underline.
- Use strong visual alignments for text.
- Keep in mind balance, symmetry and white space.
- Print on high quality white or off-white paper.

Online CVs

Increasingly, universities offer resources for placing job application materials online. If you place your CV online, here are some things to keep in mind:

- List synonymous versions of key terms (to increase chances of getting a hit).
- Include a list of keywords.
- Since these are scanned for content, don't worry about the format. Use a standard font and avoid fancy emphasis. Use bold or FULL CAPS for emphasis.
- List credentials and job titles.

Sample CVs

Richard K. Simpkins

R.Simpkins@psu.edu
 Office: 814.865.XXXX
 Cell: 814.400.XXXX

SUMMARY

Recent Ph.D. graduate in Mechanical Engineering with 9 years of experimental research experience. Specialized in convective heat transfer, fluid mechanics, additive manufacturing, gas turbine engines, coal combustion.

EDUCATION

Ph.D. 20XX Mechanical Engineering, The Pennsylvania State University, University Park

M.S. 20XX Mechanical Engineering, Colorado School of Mines, Golden

B.S. 20XX Mechanical Engineering, Colorado School of Mines, Golden

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

The Pennsylvania State University | University Park, PA

Graduate Research Assistant | August 20XX – Current

Characterizing effects of surface roughness on flow and convective heat transfer through additively manufactured channels and film cooling holes; investigating fluid flow and heat transfer through nanocellular materials.

Course Instructor | Fall 2016 Semester

Instructed 83 students in an introductory course in fluid mechanics (ME XXX); mentored 7 honors students through a special project in fluid mechanics.

Pratt and Whitney | East Hartford, CT

Turbine Durability Engineer Intern | May 20XX – August 20XX

Investigated cooling effectiveness of turbine blade leading edges to determine cause of blade overheating.

Colorado School of Mines | Golden, CO

Graduate Research Assistant | May 20XX – May 20XX

Investigated particle deposition of coal combustion in a pilot scale combustion facility simulating conditions found in pulverized coal, oxy-combustion power plants.

Undergraduate Research Assistant | July 20XX – April 20XX

Measured soot volume fraction in oxy-coal flame using a two-color laser extinction method; assisted graduate students in collecting deposits and measuring gas species in pilot scale combustion facility simulating conditions found in pulverized coal, advanced ultra-supercritical power plants.

RECENT PUBLICATIONS

DISSERTATION AND THESIS

Ph.D. **Simpkins, R. K.**, (20XX) “Cooling Performance of Additively Manufactured Microchannels and Film Cooling Holes,” The Pennsylvania State University. Advisor: XXXX XXXX.

M.S. **Simpkins, R. K.**, (20XX) “The Composition and Morphology of Coal Ash Deposits Collected in an Oxy-Fuel, Pulverized Coal Reactor,” Colorado School of Mines. Advisor: XXXX XXXX.

REFEREED JOURNAL PUBLICATIONS

Simpkins, R. K., Kneeder, J. C., Shote, M. A., Lee, D. (20XX) “Journal Article Title,” *Journal of Turbomachinery*. Accepted. (Presented at ASME Turbo Expo 20XX: Turbomachinery Technical Conference and Exposition).

Simpkins, R. K., Kneeder, J. C., Shote, M. A., Lee, D. (20XX) “Journal Article Title,” *Journal of Turbomachinery*, XXX(X), pp. XXX. (Presented at ASME Turbo Expo 20XX: Turbomachinery Technical Conference and Exposition).

Simpkins, R. K., Kneeder, J. C., Shote, M. A., Lee, D. (201X) “Journal Article Title,” *Journal of Turbomachinery*, XXX(X), pp. XXXXX. (Presented at ASME Turbo Expo 201X: Turbine Technical Conference and Exposition).

Chambers, S., Reeder, T., **Simpkins, R. K.**, Bree, D. R. (20XX) “Journal Article Title,” *Combustion and Flame*, XXX, pp. XXXX-XXXX.

Simpkins, R. K. Chambers, S., Bree, D. R. (20XX) “Journal Article Title,” *Combustion Science and Technology*, XXX, pp. XXX-XXX.

Simpkins, R. K., Brunner, D. R., Reeder, T. A., Bree, D. R. (20XX) “Journal Article Title,” *Applied Energy*, 1XX, pp. XX-XX.

NON-REFERREED CONFERENCE PUBLICATIONS

Kirsch, S., Kneeder, J. C., **Simpkins, R. K.**, Shote, M. A., Lee, D. (20XX) “Journal Article Title,” 20XX AIXX Propulsion and Energy Forum and Exposition, Atlanta, Georgia, USA, 14-19 July 20XX.

Wendt, J. O. L., Wagner, D., Morris, W., **Simpkins, R. K.**, Blanc, T., Bree, D. R. “Journal Article Title,” 17th IFRF International Members’ Conference, Clean and Efficient Fuel Conversion in Industry, Maffliers, France, 11-13 June 20XX.

Simpkins, R. K., Brunner, D., Reeder, T., Bree, D. R., DeVault, R. F., Kung, S. C. “Journal Article Title,” 20XX Technical Meeting, Western State Section of the Combustion Institute, Tempe, Arizona, USA, 19-20 January 20XX.

Simpkins, R. K., Blanc, T., Fry, A., Bree, D. R. “Journal Article Title,” 20XX Technical Meeting, Western State Section of the Combustion Institute, Tempe, Arizona, USA, 19-20 December 20XX.

AWARDS

Penn State Alumni Association Dissertation Award and Distinguished Doctoral Scholar Medal, 20XX

NASA Pennsylvania Space Grant Consortium Graduate Fellowship, 20XX-20XX

Penn State Mechanical Engineering Graduate Teaching Fellowship, 20XX

Penn State College of Engineering Fellowship, 20XX-20XX

Penn State University Graduate Fellowship, 20XX-20XX

ASME IGTI Student Advisory Committee Travel Award, 20XX

PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS

American Society of Mechanical Engineers (ASME), 20XX-Current

Advanced Combustion Engineering Research Center (ACERC), 20XX-20XX

American Institute of Chemical Engineers (AIChE), 20XX

PROFESSIONAL SERVICE

Reviewer for Journal of Turbomachinery (20XX-Current)

Teaching Assistant for one week class on turbine combustion at Shanghai Jiao Tong University (June 20XX) ASME Turbo Expo 20XX Student Liaison to the Electric Power Committee

ASME Turbo Expo 20XX Student Liaison to the Coal, Biomass, and Alternative Fuels Committee

Zina Reading

500 Pine Tree Drive

College Town 00000

cell: (XXX) XXX-XXXX

zreading@xsu.edu

EDUCATION

May 20XX

PhD—Communication, Rhetoric, and Digital Media

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XXXXX State University

Dissertation: Dissertation Title

Committee: Chris XXXXX (chair), Deanna P. XXXXX, Ann M. XXXX, Michael
XXXX

June 20XX

MA—English, concentration in rhetoric and composition

XXXX University

Thesis: “Thesis Title”

Committee: Gregory XXXX (chair), Brian D. XXXX, Grant XXXX

August 20XX

BA—English

XXXX University

PUBLICATIONS

Refereed Publications

20XX “Chapter Title,” with Co-Author and Co-Author. In *Book Title*. Ed. Brian XXXX and Gregory XXXX. University of South Carolina Press.

20XX “Article Title,” with Co-Author, Co-Author, and Co-Author. *Teaching and Teacher Education* 22.3 (April): XXX-XXX.

20XX “Article Title,” with Co-Author, Co-Author, and Co-Author. In *Advances in Research on Teaching*, Emerald Group Publishing.

Manuscripts in Submission

20XX “Chapter Title.” *Edited Collection*. Ed. William J. XXXXX. (proposal accepted; chapter submitted)

Other Publications

20XX “Chapter Title.” *InterTEXTS: A Collection of Student Writing*. 3rd Edition. Eds. Fountainhead Press, 2016.

20XX “Article Title.” *Locutorium* 5: 57-63.

GRANTS, FELLOWSHIPS, & AWARDS

20XX–20XX **Graduate Consultant**, Campus Writing and Speaking Program
XXXXX State University

20XX–20XX **Graduate Administrative Assistant**, College of Humanities and Social Sciences
XXXXX State University

20XX–20XX **Graduate Assistant Director of First-Year Writing**, Department of English
XXXXX State University

20XX–20XX **Program Assistant**, University Writing Program, Department of English
XXXXX University

RESEARCH

20XX–20XX **Co-PI with Chris XXXX and Chen XXXX on project exploring student concepts of writing and revision**

20XX–20XX **Co-PI with Dana XXXX on project exploring class size**

20XX **Research Assistant to Deanna XXXX**
Department of Communication, XXXX State University

20XX **Research Assistant to Brian XXXX**
Department of English, XXXX University

EDITING

20XX–20XX **Editorial Assistant**, *Communication Education*
National Communication Association refereed journal, editor: XXXX

20XX–20XX **Co-Editor**, *InterTEXTS: A Collection of Student Writing*, Fountainhead Press, 20XX, with Co-Editor, Co-Editor, Co-Editor, and Co-Editor.

PRESENTATIONS

National

20XX “The Discourse of Self-Commentary: What We Learn When Students Talk about Their Own Writing,” panel presentation with Chris Anson and Chen Chen. *Conference on College*

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Composition and Communication, Portland, OR, March 17.

- 20XX “Making Affect Count: Assessing the Intangible Effects of Class Size in a First-Year Writing Program,” with Dana Gierdowski. *Conference of Writing Program Administrators*, Raleigh, NC, July 17.
- 20XX “Exorcising ‘Freshman Traits’: Kenneth Burke, Wayne Booth, and Teaching Students to Read Responsibly,” *17th Biennial Rhetoric Society of America Conference*, Atlanta, GA, May 28.
- 20XX “People with Strong Opinions, Hashing It Out Respectfully”: Identification and Bipartisan Discourse in NBC’s *Parks and Recreation*.” *17th Biennial Rhetoric Society of America Conference*, Atlanta, GA, May 28.
- 20XX “Communities of Support: Investigating the Informal Peer-to-Peer Mentoring of GTAs,” *Conference on College Composition and Communication*, Houston, TX, April 9.

Regional

- 20XX **Invited featured panelist.** “More One-on-One Attention: Advocating with Research for Student and Teacher Needs in Writing Spaces,” with Dana Gierdowski. *Carolinas Writing Program Administrators Meeting in the Middle Conference*, Charlotte, NC, February 17.
- 20XX “Practicing What We Know: Examining GTAs’ Disciplinary Knowledge of Writing Studies.” *Carolinas Writing Program Administrators Fall Conference*, Little Switzerland, NC, September 13.
- 20XX “Lowering the Cap to Raise the Bar – The Sequel: An Assessment of Smaller Class Size in NCSU’s First Year Writing Program.” *Carolinas Writing Program Administrators Meeting in the Middle Conference*, Charlotte, NC, February 12.

Local

- 20XX “What’s Happening at the Conference?: Reading Disciplinary on Twitter,” with Chen Chen. *Association of English Graduate Students Conference*, Raleigh, NC, March 2015.
- 20XX “Responsible Reading and the Work of the Critic in Kenneth Burke and Wayne Booth.” *BYU English Symposium*. Provo, Utah. March 25, 2011.

TALKS & WORKSHOPS

National

- 20XX **Presenter/Facilitator**, “Cultivating Community: Exploring the Affordances and Limitations of Custom Publishing,” with co-facilitators Shannon Stimpson, Christopher Brown, Gina Szabady, Eric House, Brad Jacobson, Madelyn Pawlowski. *Conference on College Composition and Communication*, Portland, OR, March 15.
- 20XX **Participant/Attendee**, “Show Us Your Stuff: Materializing Composing Processes,” facilitated by Hannah Rule, Laura Micciche, and Cydney Alexis. *Computers and Writing* pre-conference workshop. Menomonie, WI, May 28.

Local

- 20XX **Presenter/Facilitator**, “Teaching Thoughtfully with Technology; Technology and Universal Design,” TA Training Workshop, NCSU First-Year Writing Program, Raleigh, NC, May 16.
- 20XX **Presenter/Facilitator**, “Making Affect Count: Assessing the Intangible Effects of Class Size in the First-Year Writing Program,” with co-facilitators Dana C. Gierdowski and Federico Scholcover, NCSU First-Year Writing Program Professional Development Workshop, Raleigh, NC, April 19.
- 20XX **Presenter/Facilitator**, “Preparing Inclusive Mentors: A Workshop for Graduate Students,” day-long workshop presented with nine co-facilitators, College of Humanities and Social Sciences, NCSU, April 7.
- 20XX **Presenter/Facilitator**, “*interTEXTS*, 3rd Edition Preview,” NCSU First-Year Writing Program Professional Development Workshop, Raleigh, NC, March.
- 20XX **Presenter/Facilitator**, “Program Assessment: Assessing Our Smaller Classes,” NCSU First-Year Writing Program Professional Development Workshop, Raleigh, NC, October.

CITIZENSHIP

- 20XX–20XX **Lead Peer Mentoring Collaborative Inaugural Cohort**
College of Humanities and Social Sciences, XXXX State University

Selected with nine other doctoral students to participate in regular discussions about mentoring, design curriculum for fellow graduate students, and teach a day-long workshop on how to be an effective and inclusive mentor to humanities and social science graduate students in the college.

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- 20XX–20XX **Search Committee Member**, Tenure-track line in rhetoric and composition,
Department of English, XXXX State University
- 20XX **Rhetoric Society of America Chapter President**
XXXX State University
- 20XX **Secretary**, CXXX Student Association
XXXX State University
- 20XX **Local Planning Committee**
Conference of Writing Program Administrators, XXXX, XX
- 20XX **Associate Editor**, *The Best of Rhetoric and Composition Independent Journals*
- 20XX **Conference Volunteer**
North Carolina Symposium on Teaching Writing, Raleigh, NC
- 20XX–20XX **Mentor to Graduate Student Instructors in English 312: Persuasive Writing**
- 20XX–20XX **Rhetoric Society of America Chapter President**

PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS

Conference on College Composition and Communication
National Council of Teachers of English
Rhetoric Society of America
XXXX Writing Program Administrators

MARIA JULIA POMEDORO

000 Building, University Park, PA 1680X
xxx.xxx.xxxx • mjp000@psu.edu

EDUCATION

The Pennsylvania State University, University Park, PA
Ph.D. in English, specializing in Rhetoric and Composition **Expected May 20XX**
Dissertation: “Dissertation Title”
Committee: (Names of Committee Members)

M.A. in English, specializing in Rhetoric and Composition **May 20XX**

Boston College, Chestnut Hill, MA
Bachelor of Arts in English, minor in Film Studies **May 20XX**

Imperial College, London, UK

XXXX Study Abroad and Internship Program

Spring 20XX

GRANTS AND AWARDS

XXXX at Penn State Fellow	Fall 20XX	
Penn State Liberal Arts External Incentive Award (\$500)		Fall 20XX
Penn State Charles F. Kerr Research Grant (\$3000)		20XX
Center for Democratic Deliberation at Penn State Travel Grant (\$1200)	Fall 20XX	
Penn State Wilma R. Ebbitt Graduate Travel Grant (\$1200)		20XX
Penn State English Masters of Arts Excellence in Teaching Award	20XX	
Penn State Bunton-Waller Graduate Fellow (\$7500)		20XX–20XX
IWCA Summer Institute Scholarship Award (\$900)		Summer 20XX
Boston College Sister Thea Bowman Scholar		20XX–20XX

PUBLICATIONS

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- “Chapter Title,” in *Encounters Between Jesuits and Protestants in Asia and the Americas*, ed. Robert A. Maryks (forthcoming).
- “Journal Article Title” *College English* (March 20XX).
- “Journal Article Title” co-authored with Co-Author., and Co-Author. in *Teaching/Writing: The Journal of Writing Teacher Education* (Fall 20XX).

CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

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- “The Jesuits in India: Translating Rhetoric, Translating Religion,” International Society for the History of Rhetoric, London, UK, July 2017.
- “Beyond Words: Jesuits and Pietists translating the Word of God in Tamil Grammars,” International Symposium on Jesuit Studies, Chestnut Hill, MA, June 2017.
- “The Rest of the World: Recognizing Non-Western Rhetorical Traditions Workshop,” Rhetoric Society of America Summer Institute, participant. Bloomington, IN, May 2017.
- “Researching Translingually: Beyond Linguistic Knowledge,” Conference on College Composition and Communication, Portland, OR, March 2017.
- “[Image]ining Invention: Visualizing the Origins of an Idea,” Rhetoric Society of America, Atlanta, GA, May 2016.
- “Charles W. Eliot and the Jesuits: Rhetorical Education at the Turn of the Twentieth Century,” Conference on College Composition and Communication, Houston, TX, March 2016.
- “Rights and Responsibilities in the International Writing Center,” International Writing Centers Conference, Pittsburgh, PA, October 2015.
- “Multilingual Writing Research Group: Past and Present,” Department of Applied Linguistics Roundtable, State College, PA, October 2015.
- “Learning to Become a Writing Teacher: Teacher Knowledge and Identities in Multilingual Writing Teacher Education,” American Association of Applied Linguistics, Toronto, Canada, March 2015.
- “Finding a Way in: Graduate Students Promoting Multilingual Writing Pedagogy,” Conference on College Composition and Communication, Tampa, FL, March 2015.
- “Developing Teacher Knowledge in Composition: Risks and Rewards of a Practice-Based Approach,” Conference on College Composition and Communication, Tampa, FL, March 2015.
- “Reimagining Remediation: Reinventing Basic Writing Through the Writing Center,” International Writing Center Association and National Conference on Peer Tutoring in Writing Joint Conference, Orlando, FL, October 2014.
- “*Ad Civitatis Utilitatem*: The Resistance Rhetoric of Jesuit Literacy in America,” participant and student coordinator. Rhetoric Society of America Research Network, San Antonio, TX, May 2014.
- International Writing Centers Association Summer Institute, participant. Seven Springs, PA, August 2012.

“Writing Across the Curriculum: Bridging Skills in Academic Literacy through Writing,”
Bangladesh English Language Teachers Association, Chittagong, Bangladesh, May 2012.

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

The Pennsylvania State University, University Park, PA

20XX–20XX

Instructor

Rhetoric and Composition, Continuing Education (1 section)

A rhetorically centered composition course for returning students with an emphasis on multimedia argumentation.

Honors Composition, Rhetoric Across Borders (1 section)

An honors section of first-year composition designed to develop student skills in international communication, cross-cultural rhetorics, and cultural analysis.

Rhetoric and Composition, World Campus (2 sections)

An online first-year composition course that used online discussions and peer response workshops to develop student literacy and multimedia skills.

Rhetoric and Composition, Hybrid Studio (2 sections)

A piloted replacement for Penn State’s non-credit basic writing course that mainstreamed ESL and basic writers into first-year composition through tutorial support from graduate and peer tutors.

Rhetoric and Composition, Diversity Core (2 sections)

A rhetorically centered, first-year composition course exploring diversity through student-led discussion, collaborative writing, and peer response.

Rhetoric and Composition, Learning Edge Academic Program (2 sections)

A summer-intensive composition course for incoming freshmen linked with an Education course. It emphasized contemporary issues in education.

Rhetoric and Composition (3 sections)

A rhetorically centered, first-year composition course with an emphasis on argumentation, research, peer response, and revision.

Asian University for Women, Chittagong, Bangladesh

20XX–20XX

Instructor

Composition (2 sections)

A year-long composition sequence within the university Access Academy bridge program. The first semester focused on critical literacy skills through literacy narratives and community ethnographies, and the second semester focused on rhetorical concepts for academic argumentation.

Narrative and Interpretation (2 sections)

A literature course designed for remedial first-year undergraduates with an emphasis on critical analysis of narratives across multiple genres and mediums.

Teaching Assistant

World Literature (1 section)

Introductory year-long survey to the literatures of Asia, Africa, South America, the Middle East, Europe, and the United States.

Banned Books (2 sections)

First-year writing workshop investigating censorship and book culture.

Johns Hopkins University Center for Talented Youth, Los Angeles, CA Summer 20XX–20XX

Teaching Assistant

Heroes and Villains (2 sections)

A three-week summer writing workshop for talented 5–6 grade students exploring the narrative structure of fantasy fiction.

Writing Workshop: Modern Fantasy (2 sections)

A three-week summer writing workshop for talented 4–5 grade students where students created and workshopped original fantasy fiction.

The Ancient World (1 section)

A three-week summer course for talented 3–4 grade students that introduced the structure, establishment, and diversity of Ancient civilizations.

Boston College, Chestnut Hill, MA

20XX–20XX

Teaching Assistant**Courage to Know** (1 section)

Introductory freshman cornerstone seminar on inquiry within the university.

Introduction to Feminisms (1 section)

Interdisciplinary course comprised of a faculty-led weekly lecture and small TA-led discussions that provided a historical and contemporary overview of several primary strands of feminism (as both a philosophy and social movement) in the United States.

Volunteer Teaching Assistant**COMPASS Harbor Point** (1 section)

Year-long afterschool academic enrichment program for low income elementary school students that fostered higher levels of academic performance.

WRITING PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION

The Pennsylvania State University, University Park, PA

Penn State Learning ENGL 005 Coordinator

Spring 20XX

Supervised ten graduate student tutors, managed scheduling and student-tutor relations.

Public Writing Initiative Coordinator

20XX–20XX

Commissioned projects between local businesses and university writing courses and coordinated guest speakers program on public writing and writing in the disciplines.

Center for Learning and Education Co-coordinator

20XX–20XX

Co-coordinated the graduate writing center by arranging workshops and assisting in one-on-one graduate student consultations.

Program in Writing and Rhetoric Assistant

20XX–20XX

Co-taught teaching practicum for incoming writing instructors, assessed and designed improvements to first-year writing curriculum—including better integration of multimedia composition and online learning tools—and provided day-to-day support of writing instructors and writing program administrators.

Penn State Learning ENGL 005 Tutor

20XX–20XX

Provided eight students with tutoring for their writing courses once a week each semester.

Asian University for Women, Chittagong, Bangladesh

Writing Center Director

20XX–20XX

Established the first undergraduate writing center at the AUW. I trained and supervised eight WorldTeach volunteer tutors and organized weekly writing workshops to serve over 400 undergraduate students.

Writing Tutor

20XX–20XX

Organized university-wide writing workshops and tutored undergraduate students across the disciplines in writing.

UNIVERSITY SERVICE

Graduate Student Mentor, Department of English

20XX–20XX

Workshop Facilitator, Shreyer Institute for Teaching Excellence

20XX–20XX

Graduate Representative, Program of Writing and Rhetoric Committee

20XX–20XX

Social Chair, Arnold Ebbitt Interdisciplinary Rhetoricians at Penn State

20XX–20XX

RELEVANT GRADUATE COURSEWORK

The Contemporary Feminist Rhetorical Scene • Engendering Rhetorical Power • Literacy in Crisis • Teaching Second Language Writing • Introduction to Composition Studies: Literacy, Rhetoric, and Discourse • Ethnic American Rhetoric • Comparative Rhetoric • Ethnic American Literature • Global Rhet/Comp Inc. • The Historical Development of Rhetorical Theory: Out of Attica • History/Historiography of Rhetoric • Literacy and Mobility • Literary South Asian History • Research Methods/Methodologies in Composition Studies • Phytopsyche: Discourses of Plant Intelligence and the Rhetoric of Science • Religion and State-making in the Early Modern World

PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS

Arnold Ebbitt Interdisciplinary Rhetoricians at Penn State
Conference on College Composition and Communication
International Writing Centers Association
Multilingual Writing Research Group at Penn State
National Council of Teachers of English

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Personal Statements: An Overview

In general, the personal statement represents an opportunity for you to **humanize** your application—to convert the long lists of qualifications you have included elsewhere into a narrative that essentially argues for why you are a good fit for the program or fellowship or position, and why it is a good fit for you.

Of course, a personal statement, research statement, teaching philosophy, and CV are never just a list or record of qualifications; they are always an **argument** that strategically organizes the most relevant qualifications. A selection implies selection criteria—choices about what is and is not important. Personal statements “flesh out” those selections and apply the reasoning behind them to the particular situation.

Although the rhetorical situation will vary, personal statements share several important characteristics as a genre. Whether for a graduate program or a fellowship, your personal statement should:

- Offer information that your readers can't get elsewhere in your application packet—why you chose your field, what drives you, etc.
- Make specific arguments with details and evidence about your qualifications/abilities.
- Be future oriented, describing your long-term objectives and how this position/fellowship fits.
- Present yourself as a professional—use jargon carefully, cite sources, quote, name drop, mention a relevant current event or situation.
- Illustrate your compatibility with the program or organization.

A personal statement is an argument with a thesis that makes claims using evidence.

Drafting Considerations

Suppose you were meeting face-to-face with a selection committee for the grant, for the faculty position, or for the doctoral program to which you are applying. This committee asks you, “What is the most important thing for us to know about you?” You must make a case for yourself and hold the reader’s interest. What would you say?

Determining what you would say is challenging, but it is also critical to your success in preparing an interesting, insightful personal statement. Admissions, selection, and hiring committees will want to see evidence that you underwent a careful self-examination as you wrote your personal statement. An effective statement is going to be both *personal* and *analytical*.

Generating Material

(Adapted from Richard J. Stelzer’s *How to Write a Winning Personal Statement for Graduate and Professional School*)

1. What is special, unique, distinctive, and/or impressive about you or your life story? Try to think about this in relation to other candidates in your field.
2. What details of your life (personal or family history, people, or events that have shaped you or influenced your goals) might help the committee better understand you or help set you apart from other applicants?
3. When did you become interested in this field and what have you learned about it (and about yourself) that has further stimulated your interest and reinforced your conviction that you are well suited to your field?
4. How have you learned about this field? Through classes, readings, work or other experiences, or conversations with people already in the field etc.?
5. If you have worked during your grad school years, what have you learned (e.g., leadership, technical, or managerial skills) and how has that work contributed to your growth?
6. What are your career goals?
7. Have you had to overcome any unusual obstacles or hardships in your life?
8. What personal characteristics do you possess (e.g., integrity, compassion, persistence) that would improve your prospects for success in the field or profession? Is there a way to demonstrate that you have these characteristics?

9. Why might you be a stronger candidate for the fellowship, job, or school program—and more successful and effective in the profession or field—than other applicants?
10. What are the most compelling reasons you can give for the selection committee to be interested in you?

Considering Arrangement

First, you should decide on an overall arrangement that tracks the criteria suggested in the application materials. For example, if the prompt for a personal statement reads that you should discuss personal motivation and career goals, then do so in roughly that order. In the absence of such directions (if you simply have a prompt that directs you to “provide a personal statement”), re-read other parts of the application for ideas about what the readers are looking for “between the lines” and structure your statement on that basis.

Consider using the following arrangement:

- Articulate your personal/professional inspiration.
- Discuss your relevant experiences and skills.
- Articulate a research focus and plan.
- Describe long-term objectives.
- Refer to specifics of the program that will help you achieve your objectives.

Sample Paragraphs for Key Sections of Your Personal Statement

Introduction

- (1) Find an interesting angle from which to approach your statement or to “**hook**” your reader.

We’ve beaten the odds, dear reader: we can both read and understand the passage before us. According to the National Adult Literacy Survey though, one of us—representing roughly one of every two American adults—should lack the basic literacy skills needed to function successfully in society. Without these skills, one of us should be at far greater risk to be unemployed, impoverished, and incarcerated. Tragically, that same one of us should have children likely to bear similar hardships.

- (2) Identify the specific position for which you are applying.
- (3) Create a **thesis statement** in the introductory paragraph (or early in the essay). Each body paragraph should then build on one specific aspect of this thesis statement.

As a Knauss Fellow and in my professional career, I see myself as a science communicator, focusing on estuary research and policy. I want to help create a common language between the authorities of environmental management—a language that can be used as a strong mediation and solution-finding tool. To become such an individual, I have set educational goals that will hone my skills as both a communicator and a scientist.

Body Paragraphs

Each body paragraph can build on one specific aspect of your thesis statement. If you have several different skills or experiences to discuss, stick to one topic per paragraph.

The **topic sentence** of each paragraph should introduce readers to your major idea for that paragraph, whether it is a specific skill, experience, or interest. The sentences that follow in the paragraph should describe *how* you learned that skill or *how* you have applied your abilities or *how* you pursued your interests.

As a communicator, my experience centers on writing and teaching. Through the Penn State University Liberal Arts Program, I completed the requirements for a technical writing certificate, which included courses in nonfiction, persuasive rhetoric, and article writing. One of the most rewarding results of this program was the opportunity to write, film, and edit a fifteen-minute documentary for local television as an independent studies extension of a technical writing class. The documentary examined a local natural spring and the then current research surrounding its origin and future in the face of increasing regional development. It was aired last spring to gain public support for protection of the resource.

Conclusion

Here is where you can draw on the research you have done on your target program. Use the final paragraph to stress how you will contribute to the program, or how the specific opportunities available to you through the program will help you to achieve your professional goals.

The University of Alberta is an ideal location for my doctoral study because it allows me to integrate my facility for computer science with my chosen application area: geology. My academic advisors and my own research into your programs have confirmed your strengths in computer science and glaciology, and the recent application of these areas to field research at Ellesmere Island in Nunavut is especially appealing to me. With my deep-rooted interest in Canadian geology and recognition of the quality of your university programs, I hope you will give my application every consideration.

General Advice

- Read the question carefully—determine how “personal” your response should be.
- Take the “personal” part seriously, but connect the personal with the academic/professional.
- Connect academic/professional interests with work and other experiences.
- Use as engaging an opening as possible—short narrative? Anecdote?
- Articulate a focus.
- Articulate long-term objectives.
- Be honest about possible liabilities (GPA, test scores, lack of publications, lack of directly relevant experience), but don’t call attention to them unnecessarily.
 - Cast them as learning experiences.
 - Stress other strengths.
- Discuss specifics about the program or school: reputation, specific faculty.
 - Read faculty or fellow publications and consider establishing contact.

- Mention special centers, projects, etc.
- Address what you can do for them and what they can do for you (i.e., why it's a good **fit**).
- Use language provided by the question.
 - Anchor topic sentences in criteria.
- Consider adapting action-oriented language from resume/CV; try to avoid repetition.
- Use discipline-specific language with care.
- Revise “from the top down”: focus on large-scale organizational issues, then paragraphs, then sentences, then spelling, then punctuation, etc. Ask peers and faculty mentors to read your statement critically and, if possible, through at least a couple of revisions.

A Sample Graduate School Personal Statement

A continuation of the article [Getting Personal](#) (GE&CC Nov. 2000).

Growing up in Canada with a life-long fascination for Canadian geography and the environment, I have always been interested in returning to the country. Although my family moved to the United States before I entered high school, I have always kept my eyes turned north, especially in recent years as I began to read journal articles about research conducted at the University of Alberta on John Evans Glacier, located about 80° N latitude. Now I see the opportunity to return to my birthplace and study a topic I am passionate about. Graduating next semester with a B.S. in computer science and engineering and a minor in geographic information systems, I am especially interested in attending the University of Alberta for graduate study.

Geographic information systems (GIS) is a field especially suited to investigating spatial patterns, unearthing elusive geographic parameters, modeling diverse scenarios and overlaying spatial data. This semester, in my advanced GIS course, Spatial Data Structures and Algorithms, I am part of a team developing a temporal database and program for tracing historical trading data. My computer science skills have also been put to use in two summer internship projects, where I acquired proficiency with using LIDAR (light detection and ranging) technology, now favored by NASA in its current 10-year study of Greenland and changes in the ice cap extent. Through my coursework and project experience, I have also accrued skills in using Arc/Info, ArcView, Microstation, and RDBMS software packages, and I am equally comfortable programming in Visual Basic, C++ and Java.

For my graduate research project, I would like to investigate methods for improving current GIS data models to better incorporate time as a variable in studying climate change. Changes in glaciers and polar environments occur rapidly, and these changes become important indicators of broader, potentially catastrophic, global changes. By developing and applying temporal GIS methods to glaciology, I can contribute to improved spatio-temporal analysis techniques that will provide better insights into the factors impacting the polar environment and glaciers. In addition, I can discern which temporal methods generally serve as the best predictors, and provide benefits to the GIS research community that apply to areas other than glaciology.

Once completing my master's program, my long-term goals include either entering the GIS field as a professional consultant or continuing my research and earning my Ph.D. at another program of international reputation. Having advanced experience with temporal GIS technology would make me a valuable consultant to a company, especially in the twin burgeoning fields of computer science and GIS. If I decide to continue on the research path, I would be most interested in a Ph.D. program that allows me to conduct field research in Antarctica.

The University of Alberta is an ideal location for my master's degree study because it allows me to integrate my facility for computer science with my chosen application area—geology. My academic advisors and my own research into your university programs have confirmed your strengths in both computer science and glaciology, and the recent application of these areas to field research at Ellesmere Island in Nunavut, Canada, is especially appealing to me. With my deep-rooted interest in Canadian geology and recognition of the quality of your university programs, I hope you will give my application every consideration.

For more information on writing grad school personal statements, read the full article [Getting Personal](#) from *Graduating Engineer & Computer Careers*, Nov. 2000.

Sample Luce Scholars Program Essay

As an American student of international public health, I will experience an essential part of my instruction overseas. My formal education, with the potential to undermine more culturally appropriate knowledge and practices considering its decidedly Western perspective, is still incomplete. The Luce Scholars Program presents me with the opportunity to learn Asian public health policy and programming, the benefit of which is undeniable. Asia has dealt admirably with the effects that rapidly changing socioeconomic conditions have had on health, particularly the emergence of chronic diseases that characterize industrialized nations side by side with infectious diseases that characterize still developing nations. All of this has been made even more complex by the emergence of new diseases such as AIDS.

The decision to pursue public health was not a haphazard one, but the result of a thoroughly thought out estimation of my interests, concerns and capabilities. When I was seventeen, I wrote an essay for college that described my motivation and commitment to learning a subject well for a purpose. Sitting under covers in a small, poorly lit room, listening to my father swear at the walls during a cocaine high, I wanted to understand substance abuse and addiction. The purpose then was to "grow up and learn why people become addicted to things that hurt them, their bodies . . . and their children," and my intent was to use that information in my work as a substance abuse rehabilitation counselor.

During my undergraduate years, I participated in numerous and rigorous courses related to my interest in substance abuse, one of which led to my involvement with a university-sponsored program called R2ISC (Risk Reduction of Intoxicants in the Stanford Community). R2ISC afforded me years of practical experience in public speaking, peer counseling, and community organization. Complementing my work with R2ISC, my work with heroin addicts at the Haight-Ashbury Free Drug Clinic taught me how to broach such sensitive topics as personal beliefs and practices. I learned that both individuals and groups are subject to formative experiences and subsequently subject to all of the clarity or perplexity that those experiences impart. It was also at the Free Drug Clinic that the women in early detox challenged me to apply what I had learned to my own life. They encouraged me to reevaluate my career choice and consider how my own dissatisfying experience with familial addiction had affected my decision. Coincidentally, it was that year, in my senior year, that I was offered the opportunity to study abroad with the structural and financial support of Stanford.

In Italy, challenged by a language, place, and a people that were strange and unfamiliar to me, I met every casual glance with the hope that it would provide a window or maybe even a door into the Italian culture. One month later, I met a young Italian woman who permitted a glimpse of a rich life filled with tradition, religion and family, a life very different from my own. Galvanized by her example, I reexamined many of the premises upon which I had based decisions and had acted thoughtlessly, particularly those attitudes implicated in my being born in a wealthy and industrialized nation. It was this experience in Italy, and throughout Europe where I later worked and lived for almost two years, that awakened me to the growing frequency of contact between individuals from different cultures and potential for mutual learning and collaboration, particularly between individuals representing nations that experience such gross disparities in wealth and opportunity.

When I returned to the U.S. still interested in health care, I decided to pursue further education in public health, yet with an emphasis on defining the needs of disadvantaged communities in the U.S. and abroad. I considered the Peace Corps, but desired first relevant coursework and experience. I enrolled in the Masters Internationalist Program at the Boston University School of Public Health, a program that coordinated a Masters in Public Health with field experience in a developing country. During this last year, my professors and peers--doctors nurses, and community health workers from over 50 countries--have clarified for me my role as a young citizen of a developed nation fortunate enough to have received a comprehensive education in public health, one that considers not only human health, health policy and health systems but also economic development, human rights, the role of culture and the environment. They in turn have taught me of the reality of health care delivery in severely resource constrained environments. A Catholic Sister and doctor from the Philippines impressed upon me the necessity of sustainable community-based health programs. A public health politician from Pakistan demonstrated to me the subtlety of

cross-cultural relationships. A country doctor from Northern India heightened my awareness and appreciation of governmental and non-governmental organizations like the World Health Organization and US AID, who attempt to bridge the gap between developed and developing countries. These personal relationships have reinforced my interest in a career in public health in developing countries. The task before me is an ambitious one, considering the World Health Organization's revised definition of health: "...a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being, and not merely the absence of disease," and one that cannot be accomplished with too narrow a perspective.

Similar to when I was seventeen, I am still learning for a purpose, having recognized that I will always feel the obligation to do so. Yet it is now with the blessing and encouragement of an international community with whom I attempt to bridge the growing inequity between our countries, actualizing that obligation through the transfer of the knowledge and experience that I am fortunate enough to receive. Most importantly, I wish to apply, on their terms, the theory, methodology, and technology that I have been taught, thereby fulfilling the responsibility that I have to use this knowledge in the most beneficial manner.

A Sample GRFP Personal Statement

It was just another typical day on the west coast of Africa. I stuffed my knapsack with two liters of water, sun block, and my mesh-covered glass container. Then I grabbed my butterfly net and hopped over the back ledge of my tropical home. I trekked into the local forests with one goal in mind: to find a fertile female danaid eggfly that had been eluding me for the past few weeks. Hours passed, and just when I was about to call it quits, I saw her. She casually flew by my vigilant gaze and landed on the ground directly in front of me. Nothing could describe the sensation of excitement, satisfaction, and pure adrenaline that I felt surging through my veins when I caught her. It was that moment **I knew I would become a research scientist.**

Since I was a child I've been captivated with learning. In elementary school, my desire to constantly read led to myself receiving monthly literacy awards. In middle school, I won several county speech contests and an essay contest entitled "How Literacy affects Everyday Life." In high school, I became interested in science after being selected for the University of MD's Jump Start forensic science program. I was fascinated by the different scientific techniques to solve crimes (e.g. DNA analysis, examining bones). This program then motivated me to begin rigorous coursework (e.g. Honors Chemistry, AP Statistics, AP Biology) to quench my thirst for scientific knowledge. I even created several short videos to share my passion for these subjects. One of my music videos titled "Hey Statistics" has 42,000 views on Youtube¹. Educators around the country, including my former AP Statistics teacher, have told me **my video has been a powerful tool to recruit and engage students** about how enjoyable and practical math can be.

Therefore, I used my undergraduate career at Towson University in Towson, MD as a prime opportunity to further my **lifelong love of learning.** I dabbled in a variety of enterprises such as writing news articles, directing/editing videos, and acting in short plays. I also joined the Towson Relay for Life (RFL) community to honor my father and my late mother by educating my peers about cancer, and raising funds for future research. In 2011 I displayed my enthusiasm for RFL at the 1st annual Honors College Celebration of Scholarship and Learning conference, and I was bestowed with an "Outstanding Presentation Award." In the subsequent months my **dedication** to fight cancer did not waiver, with my team raising over \$2,000 from 2012-2014.

Towards the end of my first year, I rediscovered biology after taking an introductory course. However, it wasn't until I experienced another course detailing the intricacies of many ecological interactions (e.g. deceptive brood parasites, the oyster as a keystone species in the Chesapeake Bay) that I was hooked and wanted to immediately get involved in hands-on research. I soon found an NSF sponsored Research Experience for Undergraduates (REU) program through Virginia Tech at the University of Cape Coast (UCC) in Ghana (Grant No.1061500). I knew the application process for REU programs were extremely competitive, but I was **determined** to accomplish such a feat. Nevertheless, I was rewarded for my hard work, and at the end of my second year I found myself on a flight headed for the coast of West Africa.

I independently developed and conducted not just one but two research projects in Dr. Mensah's lab. I was interested in detecting whether two plants within the same family had different effects on the development rate of the danaid eggfly, *Hypolimnas misippus*. I knew a faster development rate would allow *H. misippus*, a scarce butterfly species, to advance through vulnerable life stages quicker to avoid predation and thus would be advantageous for its survival and fitness. I determined that eggflies developed faster when reared on one plant species over another during the larval development phase, and **published** my results in the *Journal for Young Investigators*. Future work based on my research to preserve this scarce species is planned.

During the preliminary stages of my research, I had trouble locating a fertile female eggfly to lay the eggs I needed for my work. To overcome this challenge I designed and conducted a second development rate project with a local moth and crop pest, *Spodoptera exempta*. In 2012 several outbreaks of *S. exempta* erupted in the nearby farming community resulting in 50 acres that were severely damaged. I found that the development rate of *S. exempta* did not differ when reared on either plant species (grass vs. maize). I concluded that cultivating an alternative plant species (e.g. grass) around a valued crop (e.g. maize) would benefit the local agricultural community by potentially deterring the moth from damaging said valued crop. Fortunately, since 2012 there has not been another outbreak of *S. exempta*.

While conducting my research, I faced the additional obstacle of unexpected power outages each week. Despite this, I quickly became **resilient** and uncovered a new level of commitment and discipline towards my research. Besides carrying a flashlight and extra batteries, I also learned the immense importance of frequently backing-up research documents. Overall, through this research experience **I gained the confidence to not only lead and conduct research overseas, but to exploit potential difficulties as possible opportunities instead.** Therefore, I found myself exuding confidence as I discussed my research and its future implications to my peers and the UCC faculty at our closing REU symposium.

When I returned to the states, **I wanted to inspire others** to embark on a transformative research journey as I had. Thus, I spoke to high school science students in order to directly impact the next generation of scientists. I taught them that not only is conducting research riveting, but also helps polish crucial skills for success such as **written/verbal communication, problem solving, and leadership.** A majority of them told me that I had revitalized their passion to take challenging coursework, by presenting what an exciting future in science can hold. I took my talk next to the University Honors College where I was again met with fervent responses.

I continued to be an active member of the community by volunteering at several veterinary hospitals and was soon granted an internship due to my superior knowledge of animal health/welfare. I learned fundamental **teamwork and interpersonal skills** by working closely with skilled veterinary professionals. Veterinary hospitals are often very busy places with medication refills, performing procedures such as parasite analysis tests, etc. It took myself, two veterinary technicians, and our wits about us to effectively execute and manage these daily tasks to ensure a smoothly running office. Shortly thereafter, I broadened these skills by interning with the Student Conservation Association at a national preserve in the Florida Everglades. My fellow conservationists and I completed several projects such as removing invasive plants in the local community, and demolishing an old sunken, abandoned home to restore a local wetland.

In addition to impacting the global, national, and local community, I took on a leadership role in Towson's academic community. I became the Chair of Academics for the Biological Honors Society to **organize and lead educational events.** As a form of community outreach, I arranged field trips to local elementary schools to judge science-fairs. I encouraged the inquisitive nature of these children by asking them stimulating questions such as "how would your results impact your project's field, what would be your next set of tests," etc. I also **created an innovative series of lectures called "Day in the Life."** These lectures featured scientists from the community (e.g. veterinarians, aquarists, nurse practitioners) who presented not only a typical "day in the life," but also how they chose their career, any advice for students considering this path, etc. I found it very rewarding to be told by many of my peers that the relationships fostered by the speakers I had invited developed into internships, and other long-standing opportunities. To continue the legacy developed in this program I mentored/trained a successor who has continued the "Day in the Life" lecture series at Towson University since I graduated. While I balanced my officer position, a part-time job, and maintaining my high GPA, I also joined collaborative efforts to monitor the health of my community's ecosystems. Firstly, I worked with a team to assess the health of streams that were potentially affected by agricultural activity at Gunpowder Falls, a local state park. Agricultural activity can lead to the leaching of excess nutrients into streams, which can generate a toxic environment for its inhabitants. We collected measurements of dissolved oxygen levels, pH, abundance/type of macroinvertebrates, etc, for our analysis and found several variables were negatively affected. Our results were given to Gunpowder Falls who continues to recruit scientists annually to monitor these streams.

Secondly, I joined Dr. Beck's lab to assist in a 10 year project on assessing deer-browsing effects on soil invertebrates and their predators at a local campground. The increasing deer population may negatively affect the abundance of other wildlife and plant species. Together we set-up several 10x10 foot deer exclosures, collected plant species composition data, leaf litter samples within patches of the exclosure and control sites, etc. From these samples I identified and sorted hundreds of invertebrate specimens (spiders, centipedes, millipedes, ants, etc). Recently, additional sites have been built, but future data analysis of existing sites are planned. Through both of these experiences **I learned the importance of collaborative science** by being able to help estates that lack funding and the expertise to conduct research on their own.

As my exploration of biology continued, I encountered the realm of animal behavior and immediately became absorbed in my studies, especially regarding fish behavior. **I was fascinated how a species that I had underestimated for so long could elicit such complex behaviors**, such as the zigzag courtship display of the male stickleback. This interest deepened while I worked as an aquarist on campus. I learned that refuges promote natural territorial behavior in cichlids. I also observed an abnormal spiraling behavior of several fish likely due to a neurological illness. It was then that I decided to pursue animal behavior in graduate school.

As my PhD studies progress in Dr. Braithwaite's lab, I will be able to fully prepare for a gratifying future career as a **professor at a top-notch university**. Furthermore, I aspire to carry the lessons from my past experiences with me on my future endeavors, as they have had a significant impact on the type of scientist I wish to become. I will continue to address imperative research questions to advance current scientific knowledge, and communicate my research to a larger audience, both of which I will prompt my future students to do. Currently, I'm conducting an experiment to determine if enrichment (e.g. tunnels, plants) enhances maneuverability in trout, which would be beneficial for the survival of captive-release fish when facing predation.

I will continue my role as a **leader and educator** by stimulating the curiosity of my students to inspire a love of learning, including while I teach lab courses as a **graduate assistant**. This is also evident as I plan to recruit students from educational facilities in Panama to aid in the conducting of my research, as well as visit schools in Pennsylvania to educate children about important concepts (e.g. adaptation) surrounding my research (see "Project Proposal"). Currently, I am implementing this role by assisting a behaviorist to educate the community on proper scientific methods (e.g. positive reinforcement) to better one's relationship with their pet.

I learned that opportunities that require independent work versus teamwork each provide a unique subset of requisite skills for success, and I will thus encourage my students to attain both. I discovered the importance of persevering through adversities and utilizing them to one's advantage, and will motivate my students to push through challenges as well.

My enduring enthusiasm to learn has shaped me into the scientist I am today. I am a hard-working, persistent, and passionate leader who has a **unique eye to the biological, ecological, and behavioral side of a variety of research questions**.

- 1) <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tAh2GxI23xY&list=UUwKF0f77AucqztMHApIITcw>

Research Statements: An Overview

Many academic institutions and research institutes request a statement of research as part of a job application. A research statement summarizes your research accomplishments, your current research, and research you plan to conduct in the future. Strong research statements present a clear narrative of how your past research relates to your current research agenda and how your agenda is well-suited to the particular goals, resources, and needs of the institution to which you are applying. Weak research statements fail to articulate the significance of your research to your discipline, present research goals that are too ambitious, or neglect to address the particular needs of an institution or position.

Your research statement can include information that clarifies how you plan to accomplish your research agenda including funding potential, professional collaborations, requirements for research experimentation (such as equipment or space). Although you will want to use discipline-specific language, focus on creating a document that is readable.

Research statements differ from personal statements in that they are strictly evidence-driven rather than narrative-driven documents. A research statement should describe your research. As Dr. Karen Kelsky writes, the "golden rule" of writing a research statement is to "talk about the research, and not about yourself." Talk with your advisor about how much your research statement should be tailored to a particular position or institution.

General Advice about Research Statements

- Research statements are generally 2 or more pages long. Because you want committee members to read your document, be mindful about the length of your document.
- Look at multiple examples of research statements written by people in your field.
- Articulate the core argument of your research.
- Carefully consider what problem your research tries to address or solve. What specific skills do you use to address the problem?
- Identify specific examples of related research questions that you have already successfully researched. Establish your expertise in your discipline and the potential you have to contribute to a field of knowledge.
- Discuss where you plan to take your research. Be careful not to overstate your research agenda. Present work that is ambitious, but manageable within a specific period of time. For example, think about what you would like to work on for the next five years and what you can realistically accomplish in that amount of time.
- Include any external recognition of your work including publications, grants, funding, or awards.
- Make statements supported by evidence rather than tell a story. State what you did and why it matters for your discipline.
- Give yourself lots of time to draft. Expect that your document will have to go through multiple revisions.
- It is best if you can discuss tangible results from your research. If you are still collecting or analyzing results, focus on the importance of the questions you are asking or the methodology you are applying.

Getting Started: Organizational Tips

1. **Write a focused statement of a research problem:**

“In the past, preparation of novice instructors of writing often amounted to no preparation at all. Characterizing the connections GTAs make between their prior knowledge and their practice as new instructors of writing demands a more serious investigation of the sources, resources, and professional identities that inform a GTA’s pedagogy and classroom instruction.”

2. **Identify how your work fits into a broader field/area of research:**

“Recent work on GTAs calls for more nuanced, rigorous inquiry into the preparation and learning of new instructors. My work identifies key factors that influence the formation of novice teachers’ identities, the first step in moving away from the reactionary training models that have become common in the field of composition studies.”

3. **State what you want your work to do:**

“My research aims to bridge the gap between administrative writing program design and lived experience.”

Exercise 3: Applying the “The Golden Rule” to the Research Statement

*From Karen Kelsky’s blog post: “The Golden Rule of the Research Statement.”

Revise the following paragraph to better reflect the project’s disciplinary significance. Use an evidentiary rather than a narrative style.

“I work on transitions in the care of the elderly in Japan. I am particularly focused on the recent growth in government run care facilities. I use ethnographic methods to address

the nature of the care given in these facilities, and I explore how the care is received by the patients and their families. My dissertation explores one such facility in northern Japan.”

Karen Kelsky’s Revision:

“The rapidly aging society is one of the primary challenges facing Japan in recent decades. Both the public and private sectors have hastened to respond to emerging needs of the elderly and their families. Over 200 new government run elderly care centers have been built in recent years. In my dissertation, I conduct an ethnographic study of one such facility in northern Japan, in order to explore the nature of the care provided there, as well as its reception by the elderly themselves and their family caregivers.”

Research Statement Examples:

<http://pages.cs.wisc.edu/~kovar/researchStatement.pdf>

https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B9DjC_ju-eVCOHVCUHppqZnJMVW8/view

http://www.cs.cornell.edu/~ssuri/About_Me_files/SidSuriRS.pdf

Helpful Resources

Research Plans

Verba, Cinthia. *Scholarly Pursuits: A Guide to Professional Development during the Graduate Years*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, 2013.

Personal Statements

Aaron, J. E. (2001). *The Little, Brown compact handbook* (4th ed.). New York: Longman.

Andrews, D. C. (2001). *Technical communication in the global community*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Huckin, T. N., & Olsen, L. A. (1991). *Technical writing and professional communication for non-native speakers of English* (2nd ed.). New York: McGraw-Hill.

Lay, M. M., Wahlstrom, B. J., Rude, C. D., Selfe, C. L., & Selzer, J. (2000). *Technical communication* (2nd ed.). Boston: McGraw-Hill.

Markel, M. (2004). *Technical communication* (7th ed.). Boston: Bedford/St. Martin’s.

Schall, J. (2002). *Style for students*. Eden Prairie, MN: Outernet.

Stelzer, R. (1989). *How to write a winning personal statement for graduate and professional school*. Princeton: Peterson's Guides.

<http://www.accepted.com>. A resource especially for graduate and professional program applicants, which includes sample essays and online feedback.

http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/pw/p_perstate.html. An overview of personal statement writing from Purdue University's excellent Online Writing Lab.

http://www.ssrc.org/fellowships/art_of_writing_proposals.page. An article provided by the Social Science Research Council on the "art" of writing proposals. Directly relates to proposals for research work, but much of the information is applicable to personal statement writing.

Curricula Vitae (CVs)

Anthony, R., & Roe, G. (1998). *The curriculum vitae handbook: How to present and promote your academic career*. 2nd ed. San Francisco: Rudi. (Includes a wide variety of sample CVs for formatting inspiration).

Hume, K. (2005). *Surviving your academic job hunt: Advice for humanities PhDs*. New York: Palgrave. (Although this is geared towards humanities majors, it has excellent information on academic interviews, formatting teaching statements, and several sample CVs).

Purdue's Online Writing Lab: <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/641/01/>

The Chronicle of Higher Education offers tips on writing science CVs (includes a link to a sample CV formatted for research and for teaching positions): <http://chronicle.com/jobs/2000/03/2000033102c.htm>

Chronicle writers offer suggestions for improving five sample CVs from a range of fields: <http://chronicle.com/jobs/news/1999/09/99091701c/careers.html>

Chronicle writers offer tips on revising CVs at 3 different stages of academic careers (i.e., for job applications, tenure review, promotion): <http://chronicle.com/jobs/news/2000/10/2000102001c/careers.html>