




Personal Statement Workshop

Presented by UConn SOM/SODM
First-Gen Interest Group



Agenda


- I. Overview of Personal Statement: Purpose, Format, Content
 - II. Approaching the narrative mindset exercises
 - III. Breakout rooms (~20 minutes): brainstorming, writer's block, revision phase
 - IV. Final questions, next steps, and wrap-up
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Personal Statement Purpose

- Answer the questions of...
 - Why have you selected this profession?
 - What motivates you to enter this profession?
 - Will you be successful in this graduate program and in this profession?



Personal Statement Format

- AMCAS (MD schools): 5300 characters (including spaces)
 - AACOMAS (DO schools): 5300 characters (including spaces)
 - AADSAS (Dental schools): 4500 characters (including spaces)
 - Typically, narrative style with 1-3 stories where you show (not tell) your answers to the purpose questions
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Personal Statement Content

Often our "why" is hard to pin down, but you have been working so hard for years accumulating experiences that demonstrate your fit. Let's start there!

- AAMC Premed Competencies
- ADEA Common Personality Traits



Personal Statement Content

Decide what experiences you can write about in other sections of your application and what will have the most impact in your personal statement.

- AMCAS "Other Impactful Experiences" optional essay (1325 characters)
- Work and Activities section – descriptions can be stories!
- Common supplementals/secondaries (such as diversity or COVID-19 impact)

Personal Statement Content

- Now that you have your list of experiences, find your narrative thread.
 - Try sharing the bits and pieces with friends, family, and advisors to see what resonates with them
 - 45-minute Applicant Coaching Session through Pre-Medical and Pre-Dental Advising
 - You might have an "aha" experience or it might be a series of impactful events that have pushed you into this field.

Exercise: Guiding Questions

- In moments of challenge or uncertainty, what brought you back to this field?



Exercise: Guiding Questions

- In moments of challenge or uncertainty, what brought you back to this field?
 - Can answer both why this profession and why you will succeed
 - Challenges/uncertainty can include problems facing healthcare you have experienced, personal setbacks, COVID-19 setbacks, major/career changes
 - **Think forwards to how this experience will inform your care**



Exercise: Guiding Questions

- What do you hope to be able to do with this degree? Where do you see yourself in 5 years? 10 years?



Exercise: Guiding Questions

- What do you hope to be able to do with this degree? Where do you see yourself in 5 years? 10 years?
 - Does not have to be a specific specialty!
 - Specific populations (rural, urban, underserved)
 - Mix of patient care + research, education, advocacy, global health, etc
 - Type of care (integrative, culturally informed)
 - **Think backwards to what in your experiences have created this mindset around the care you want to give!**

Exercise: Linking Core Competencies to Experiences



Commitment to Learning and Growth: Practices continuous personal and professional growth for improvement, including setting and communicating goals for learning and development; **reflects on successes, challenges, and mistakes;** pursues opportunities to improve knowledge and understanding; and asks for and incorporates feedback to learn and grow.



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- Research: setbacks you overcame and what that taught you; pursuing independent projects
- Learning another language: why did you want to learn it and how will it impact your future care?
- Shadowing: learning more about a particularly interesting case

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- Handling an emergency: even if you were not able to provide medical care, how did you use available resources to help
- Leadership: a problem you had to solve or an initiative you took on individually or as a team but talk about the decision-making process

Exercise: Linking Core Competencies to Experiences

- **Caring and concerned about how the patient feels during procedures.**


Because dentists work in a very small and sensitive space of the body, a good dentist communicates with the patient during every step of a procedure, making sure they are okay and not in too much pain. Good dentists go to great lengths to make their patients comfortable and relaxed without pain.



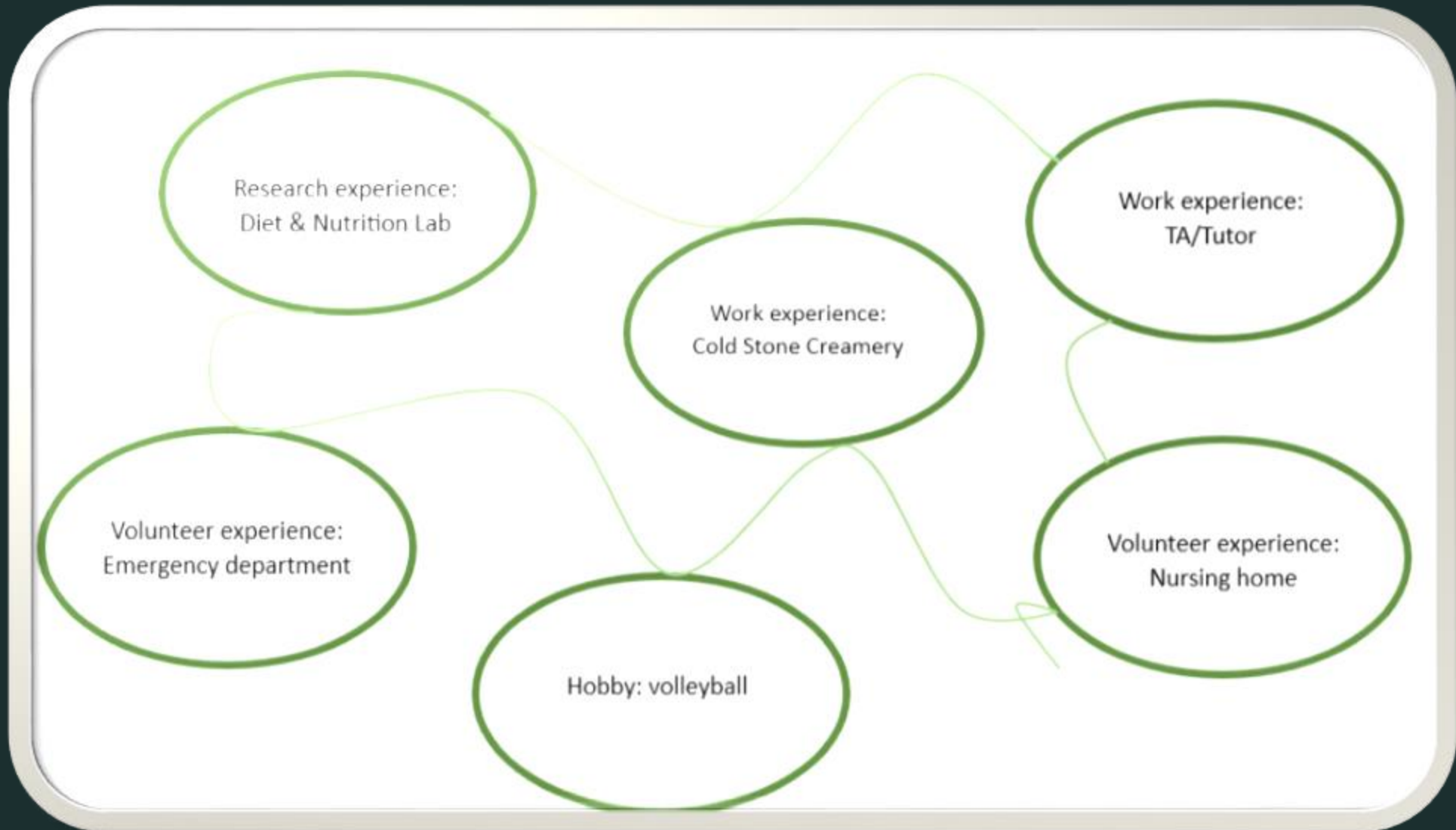
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- **Volunteer interactions:** a time when you comforted someone or recognized their need and accommodated them
 - **Personal Stories:** We as patients and family/friends of patients know how we want to be treated so talk about a time when you received good care or a time care could have been improved (but be careful with this).
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Exercise: Finding a narrative thread



Tips & Reminders

- Tell your story- please do not try to convince the admissions committee that you are qualified.
- Tell YOUR story- if you're talking about an experience, how did it make you feel?
- Revisions are expected!



Breakout Rooms!

Room 1: Brainstorming Stage
– Manjot

Room 2: Writer's Block Stage
- Qingli

Room 3: Revising Stage -
Alice & Chris

Room 4: Catherine (Dental)

Questions and Wrap - Up

- UConn Resources

- UConn Writing Center
- Staff: Advisors, Career Center Coaches

- Advice

- Keep a journal to note any significant events to refer back to while working on your application
 - Start your secondary essays early!
 - Get as many trusted* eyes on your essays as you can
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