Guidelines for Creating Effective Personal Statements for MEDICAL SCHOOL

PREPARATION

1. Research the institution - Questions to consider are:
   - What are the criteria for acceptance?
   - What are the values of the program and institution?
   - What themes are expressed by students and staff?

2. Conduct self-reflection:
   - What are your motivations for applying to this institution?
   - What are your interests, skills, and goals?
   - How do your personal goals match with the institution and program?
   - What is the story of the path you have taken (academic, work and life experiences) which have led you to apply for this program?
   - What have you accomplished academically, why and with whom?
   - What do you want to do academically, and professionally, where, why and with whom?

CONSIDERATIONS FOR WRITING YOUR STATEMENT

1. Follow directions on each specific application process:
   - Read each question carefully and make sure you answer each fully;
   - Customize each statement to reflect your research and interest in that particular program;
   - Do not send a generic personal statement. Make yourself stand out from the crowd!
   - Follow required format and word limits.

2. Mention your research about the program or school:
   - What opportunities does this program offer? Why are you applying? What is it known for?
     Why is it a match for you (beyond its convenience)?
   - What will the program give you? What will you bring to the program?
3. **Tone: be genuine, realistic, unique, excited and anecdotal:**

- Why does this program or school fit you and your long-term goals? Demonstrate your interest and motivation;
- Emphasize what is unique about you (i.e., classes, notable professors, projects, and events);
- Demonstrate that you have a realistic sense of the profession and the training required.

4. **Be creative while enhancing your assets:**

- Carefully balance the passion, and anecdotes, with marketing and the practical information;
- Make your opening statement and first paragraph eye-catching;
- Be creative; you may wish to have a theme running through your statement; an athlete could carefully use sports terminology in a medical school application;
- Avoid meaningless phrases such as "I've always wanted to..." or "I like to help people";
- Make sure you indicate clear professional goals;
- How are you prepared for medicine?
- Draw a link between volunteer and academics with medicine.

**AFTER CREATING YOUR DRAFT**

Get your draft critiqued:

- Get lots of objective feedback from peers, professors, Career Services, writing labs, and other qualified sources;
- Are you communicating what you wish to say?
- Does it look professional and well written? Look at grammar, flow, segues, font size, aesthetics, spelling and format.

*Note: Career Services can help with the review and/or editing of personal statements for medical school applications. Once your personal statement is written, you may book your appointment with a career counsellor using myCareer, accessible via Carleton Central.*