"Learning is discovering that something is possible."
- Fritz Perls—
Writing the College Admission Essay

As a transfer student, the essay is an important part of your admission application for the University of California and most private and out-of-state universities. The essay is not read in isolation but with all the information you provide in the application packet.

**Tips for Getting Started**
1. Do not wait until the last minute to write your essay!
2. Do the preparation work before you begin to write your essay.
   - Investigate and explore your audience.
     - Find out as much as you can about the universities you are applying to and their admissions process.
     - What do the admissions officers want to find out about their applicants through the personal statement.
     - This information can usually be found in the application booklet and also on the university’s website (click on Admissions).
   - Explore Yourself!
     - The more you know about yourself the easier it will be to write your essay.
   - Try these Self Exploration Exercises
     **Exercise I – Identify Your Personality Traits**
     - Take a piece of paper and divide it into 4 columns.
       - On top of the 1st column write “Me.”
       - On top of the 2nd column write “Best Friend.”
       - On top of the 3rd column write “Favorite Professor/Teacher.”
       - On top of the 4th column write “Family.”
     - Starting with the “Me” column list all the words that you would use to describe yourself. Do this for each of the columns.
     - Put a check mark by the words that came up most often.
     - Pick the 3 words that came up most often and list the different situations in which you have exhibited these characteristics.
     **Exercise II – Assess your accomplishments.**
     - Write down everything that you’re proud of.
     - Don’t limit your accomplishments to your academic career.
     - If you have overcome a difficult obstacle make sure to include it.
     - Don’t worry about how big or small the accomplishment is. If it pops into your head, write it down.
     **Exercise III – List your skills.**
     - Start by looking at the accomplishments you listed for Exercise II.
     - Using only 1 or 2 words, list the skills that these accomplishments demonstrate.
     - List situations/circumstances/examples from your life that show that you have these skills.

**Writing the Essay**
- Get Personal - A successful essay is the one where the reader learns about you and your life.
- Details, Details, Details – Use details to personalize your essay and to make it more interesting to read.
- Be Honest – Write about what really happened and who you really are.
Tell a Story – Your story is the only one that’s important.

Tips for the Mechanics of Writing the Essay

- Be original.
- Be yourself.
- Remember to put things in the words and language with which you are comfortable. Don’t use big, fancy words normally not used to communicate, especially if you are not sure of the meaning of the words.
- A simple style is best. Good writing sounds like speech rather than a vocabulary review lesson.
- Use clear, vivid prose.
- Write about the things you find most intriguing
- Spend most of the time working on your Introduction.
- Don’t summarize in your Introduction.
- The body of each paragraph must relate to the first sentence of the paragraph.
- Use transitions.
- Your Conclusion is crucial.
- Revise, Revise, Revise!
- Make corrections in sentence construction, grammar, punctuation, and spelling. Read aloud what you have written to help you locate any rough spots you will need to rework.
- Put your draft aside for twenty-four hours and read it again.
- Have a professor or counselor review your essay for grammar and spelling.
- Have a family member or close friend read your essay for an “authenticity check.”

Personal Statement Checklist

Does your personal statement do the following things:

- Assist the reader in learning about you as an individual?
- Assist the reader in gaining an understanding of your experiences, accomplishments, and point of view that you would bring to the University’s undergraduate body?
- Assist the reader in gaining an understanding of your attributes and experiences that are not evident through a review of your academic record?

In the Personal Statement did you:

- Describe any unusual circumstances or challenges you have faced?
- Discuss how you responded to your unusual circumstances or challenges?
- Discuss your interest in your intended major?
- Discuss how your interest in your academic field developed?
- Describe any related work or volunteer experience you’ve had?
- Discuss your long-term goals after the Bachelor’s degree?

Check Out these Websites For More Information...

http://www.collegeboard.com/apply/essay_skills/
http://collegeapps.about.com/od/collegeessay/a/brainstorm.htm
http://www.sru.edu/depts/admissio/lagnese/essays.htm
http://www.carleton.edu/admissions/essay/
http://www.west.net/~stewart/beste.htm
http://www.baycongroup.com/education/ed_essay_01.htm
http://www.accepted.com/college/dosdons.aspx
http://www.accepted.com/college/tenwritingtips.aspx
http://www.accepted.com/college/miningyouridentity.aspx
http://fastweb.monster.com/fastweb/resources/articles/index/102002?id
The Personal Statement for the UC Application

Purpose of the Personal Statement
- The Personal Statement is an opportunity for applicants to provide information that supports and augments the review process.
- This information should enable the applicant to make the best case possible for admission. The information in the Personal Statement should add clarity, richness and meaning to the information collected in other parts of the application form.
- The Personal Statement completes the application for admission.

Use of the Personal Statement in the Admission Review Process
The personal statement is one component of the application. An admissions decision will never be based on the content of a personal statement alone.

The Questions

Question #1: Focus on Academic Preparation and Achievement
What is your intended major? Discuss how your interest in the field developed and describe any experience you have had in the field – such as volunteer work, internships or employment, participation in student organizations and activities – and what you have gained from your involvement.

Question #2: Focus on Potential to Contribute
Tell us about a talent, experience, contribution or personal quality you will bring to the University of California.

Question #3: Open-Ended Question
Is there anything you would like us to know about you or your academic record that you have not had the opportunity to describe elsewhere in this application?

Personal Statement Format
- Applicants will respond to three questions using a total of 1,000 words.
- One of the questions should be given an extended answer of at least 600 words.
- The applicant may choose which question will receive the extended response.
- The remaining two questions should be answered in approximately 200 words each.

Advice to Applicants:
- In the UC electronic application, there will be separate entry boxes for each question and a word counter to help applicants track the length of their responses. Follow the word-count guidelines as closely as you can to stay within the 1,000-word limit, but don’t worry if you run a little over or under on an individual question (for example, 205 or 199 words is fine).
- Proofread your personal statement very carefully for spelling and grammatical errors. Although we do not evaluate specifically for grammar/style, a poorly written personal statement is not an effective one. Read the instructions and answer the prompts.
- Avoid lists of accomplishments.
- Do not manufacture hardship.
- Give concrete examples to support your assertions.

Check out UC Berkeley’s Tips for the UC Personal Statement at
http://students.berkeley.edu/files/Admissions/Transfer_06.pdf

More information on the UC Personal Statement can be found at:
http://www.universityofcalifornia.edu/educators/counselors/resources/materials/conferences.html
Under the “Community College Workshop Materials” heading, click on “The Personal Statement.”