

THE PERSONAL ESSAY for UC SCHOOLS

--these are my personal notes from a talk by an admissions person from UC--

Drafting the essay:

This is NOT an academic essay-- not an essay at all, so should not be structured like it or have that tone of voice. They really want to know who the student is.

When the draft is done, the student should have two readers:

someone they know well: that reader should re-iterate what the student is saying if it is done well

someone they do not know well: the writing should help them get to know the student through the reading of it

What Admissions takes into consideration: a comprehensive review of what academic & non-academic things student takes advantage of

bad grades if they are returning to school after a while, are not important if they are doing better a W here and there is okay except as a pattern

a student-parent, someone who is supporting others, or giving back to the community in some way is very very important

personal achievements: what the students has overcome, concerns for others in activities, home, church, community

leadership - in the broadest sense (ie, president of the Economics club) - non-traditional (student-parent)

motivation: what have they encountered - initiative (ie, started something on campus, finding resources)

Prompts for UC schools

1. Intended major: show passion!

2. personal quality, talent, accomplishment, or contribution: frame it in this way: talk about yourself, not about a parent or grandparent, etc. Don't be embarrassed of your accomplishments!

Include: curiosity for major: don't say "I've persevered." Show examples

context to academic & personal experience-- join the two with a bridge

maturity, perseverance, tenacity

helps them see distinctions-- how you are different
context

scholarships (the personal statement can also get you money!)

3. "Academic comments" box (550 words--used to be 500)

-clarifies context of academic or personal environment

not extension of personal statement , but if something doesn't fit into 1 or 2, write it here where you can explain where

-why your grades went down & then up

-sole support for family in addition to school, for ex

-address a W in one sentence

More than the Personal Statement

Personal statement doesn't stand on its own

Doesn't matter whether student is full or part time--if they take a lot of units and do really well, looks great; if they take less classes and do well, good, fine

Admissions doesn't look for ways to take points off

Ws unanswered for: they have questions

It's good to have answers, but no fault

Looking for demonstration of interest in major, sharing this passion with others

Going over application takes officer 15-20 mins at most, no rubric for selection, no "points" system

One person reads the statement and application

PROMPTS FOR UC Personal Statement

In reading your application, we want to get to know you as well as we can. There's a limit to what grades and test scores can tell us so we ask you to write a personal statement.

Your personal statement — consisting of responses to two prompts — is your chance to tell us who you are and what's important to you. Think of it as your opportunity to introduce yourself to the people reading your application. Be open, be honest, be real. What you tell us in your personal statement gives readers the context to better understand the rest of the information you've provided in your application.

A few tips: Read each prompt carefully and be sure to respond to all parts. Use, specific, concrete examples to support the points you want to make. Finally, relax. This is one of many pieces of information we consider in reviewing your application; an admission decision will not be based on your personal statement alone.

Respond to both questions, using a maximum of 1,000 words total. You may allocate the word count as you wish. If you choose to respond to one prompt at greater length, we suggest your shorter answer be no less than 250 words. Stay within the word limit as closely as you can. A little over — 1,012 words, for example — is fine.

Because of the 40-minute time limit in place on each page of the application, we recommend that you DO NOT compose your answers here. Compose and save them using a word processing program, then copy and paste them below.

You can also click the "save draft" button beneath each box to save your writing in progress. The page will refresh and reset your 40-minute time limit.

Proofread your personal statement very carefully

Prompt #1

What is your intended major? Discuss how your interest in the subject developed and describe any experience you have had in the field - such as volunteer work, internships and employment, participation in student organizations and activities - and what you have gained from your involvement.

Prompt #2

Tell us about a personal quality, talent, accomplishment, contribution or experience that is important to you. What about this quality or accomplishment makes you proud, and how does it relate to the person you are?