

AOA Guide Series: How to Write a Personal Statement

Example of Surgery Personal Statement

Throughout my life at home, dinner conversation was never short of fascinating or enlightening. My father was a captivating storyteller and would detail the events of his day in a mysterious place called the “operating room.” His stories captivated me whether exciting or emotional, especially if they were complete with props or images. Despite this, I didn’t decide on medicine as a career until my father, a surgeon, was forced to change specialties due to personal illness. While aiding with administration of interferon therapy at home, I got a glimpse of medical care, as my first patient battled multiple sclerosis.

While at Colgate University, I worked as a technician in the emergency department with my father. Being a life-long athlete, I was impressed with medicine’s team approach, however I realized I desired to fix problems rather than temporize them. Surgeons came to meet patients within the emergency department and their comprehensive evaluations and the decision-making process that ensued fascinated me. Patients that I performed procedures on and quickly developed relationships with were then taken to the operating room and my care for them ended. I found myself wanting more interaction with the patients from initial evaluation and to work towards resolution of their problems.

Since my arrival to Jefferson Medical College I have pursued surgery as a career, despite keeping an open mind towards all fields. I immediately embraced Anatomy and my cadaver became a study guide because of known meticulous dissections. Furthermore, I truly enjoyed all clinical rotations throughout medical school, however none more than General Surgery. I felt welcomed by the residents and faculty and again was impressed by the team approach to every problem. During other rotations I learned the importance of history and physical exam and recognized the cerebral nature of an extensive differential diagnosis, however I always wanted to take action to treat each patient. I realized that often my care for each patient was over once a diagnosis was reached, which was the same observation I made while working in the emergency room during college. It was during these times on the hospital wards that I knew I would not be satisfied becoming anything else other than a surgeon.

More than pure motivation, I will bring a passion for advancement, education, and leadership to the field of Surgery. Since university I have enjoyed research pursuits including working on Multiple Sclerosis at the NIH and aiding with the construction of a large databases of pancreatic and thoracic surgical cases. Moreover, I have been extensively involved in the Gibbon Surgical Society, which is the surgery student interest group on campus. As current president of the society, I oversee a diverse agenda of educational lectures, clinical skills events, surgical shadowing programs with the goal of introducing medical students to Surgery earlier in their training. The society is special to me because I feel that becoming a physician not only means being a life-long learner, but also a life-long teacher. I strive to provide my fellow students with the same mentoring and fascination with surgery that I experienced while exploring careers in medicine.

Becoming a surgeon will be the culmination of a journey that began with my first patient, my father, and the beginning of a life of duty to patients, education, and

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advancement. I hope to become part of the elite healers, surgeons, whose team approach I embraced early in my life in medicine.