MEMORANDUM

DATE: February 3, 2012
TO: Paul Kellermann
FROM: Emma Katz
SUBJECT: Job Application Package

This memo will detail my decisions regarding my résumé and personal statement for the Job Application Package. I have provided an audience analysis describing medical school admissions requirements, as well as a curriculum description explaining the expectations and outcome of being a medical student. Lastly, I included a rhetorical analysis describing the substance and arrangement of my résumé and personal statement.

Audience Analysis: Medical School Admissions Committees

My résumé and personal statement were written with the primary American Medical College Application Service (AMCAS) application in mind. Most United States medical schools, including all those to which I am applying, require the AMCAS application first before they send you a more detailed secondary application. While not submitted in résumé form, the AMCAS does ask for the type of information that appears on a résumé. It also requires a personal statement.

Requirements for medical school vary depending on the university. Typically, a school looks at GPA, MCAT scores, required classes, letters of recommendation, extracurricular activities, jobs, and medical experience when making admissions decisions. GPA and MCAT requirements vary by school, but an applicant should have a 3.70 GPA and 30 MCAT score to be competitive. Required classes are always at least one year each of biology, general chemistry, organic chemistry, and physics. Some schools may require other subjects like calculus, statistics, and psychology as well. Letters of recommendation are written by science and non-science professors, the undergraduate university’s pre-med committee, and by any doctors or other people who know the applicant well. Professors writing letters often ask for a résumé and personal statement, and often think similarly to an admissions committee when evaluating a student. Therefore, my résumé and personal statement also will be used when requesting those letters. Extracurricular activities, jobs, and medical experience show well-roundedness and an interest in medicine. An applicant must be strong in all of these categories to have a competitive edge over other applicants, because spots in medical school are very limited.

My specific audience is the committee at each school who reads my resume (or AMCAS application) and personal statement, and ultimately chooses whether or not to admit me. That committee can be comprised of a few or many individuals, and their identities are unknown to applicants. Also, the members of the committees that interview applicants are unknown, but can include professors, alumni, or doctors in the community. These individuals can vary each interview day. Ultimately there is no way of knowing my specific audience, except that it will likely be a highly-critical, very intelligent group of people who basically will decide my future.
Curriculum Description: Life as a Medical Student

Medical students at the allopathic medical schools to which I am applying study for four years and ultimately earn their Doctor of Medicine (M.D.) degrees. The first two years are preclinical. Students study core classes such as anesthesiology, biochemistry, emergency medicine, neurology, orthopedics, physiology and radiology, in classrooms and labs. The final two years are clinical study, which occurs in teaching hospitals. Students, working under resident and attending doctors, observe and participate in patient care. Certain rotations are required, while others may be taken as electives, depending on the university. After completing four years and passing the first part of the medical board licensing exam, the student earns an M.D.

Once an M.D., the now-doctor must complete an internship and potentially a fellowship, and then pass the rest of the medical board licensing exam before becoming a doctor who can practice independently. This involves another round of applying and interviewing, but hopefully with a much more impressive résumé.

Rhetorical Analysis

I tailored my résumé and personal statement to a medical school admissions committee, although they will not actually receive a copy. I also kept in mind the teachers I will ask for recommendation letters, who look for the same information as the admissions committee.

I divided my résumé into education, volunteer work, work experience, skills, and honors and activities sections because each is of great importance to my audience. I did not include an objective. My objective overall is to be accepted into medical school, however, I also plan to use this resume to solicit letters of recommendations from professors. In that case, my objective would technically be to get a letter. It just did not seem necessary to include either on the résumé. I chose to go onto a second page because I felt that everything I included is relevant, and cramming it onto one page would have eliminated all white space.

Under each heading I made specific strategic decisions. I chose to put education first because it is the most crucial, as grades and MCAT scores (which I have not taken yet and have therefore omitted) are the biggest determining factor for admission. I included scholarships under education as opposed to honors, because I was trying to better maintain the 1/3 each balance of education, experience, and activities. Also, my scholarships all were earned because of my grades, so they fit well there. I omitted relevant courses because a transcript is required by the AMCAS application, and also because the pre-med plan is very strictly structured, so none of my classes are really unique.

I placed volunteer work second because my hospital experience best demonstrates my interest and dedication to medicine. To shorten my resume, I only included two items: my most important, the Faulkner Hospital position, and most recent, the Greater Boston Aid to the Blind. The Faulkner Hospital was my lengthiest and most rewarding volunteer job, and also the most relevant to medical school, which is why I listed it first rather than going in reverse chronological order. I included the Greater Boston Aid to the Blind because it was recent and personal for me due to my grandmother’s blindness. I did not include my smaller volunteer projects to save space. Instead I managed to incorporate some of them into honors and activities.
I listed work experience after volunteer work because it flowed nicely. I have only had two paid jobs, so nothing was left out. I chose to include each for a different reason. I have worked at Chem Scientific for almost five years, and have a great deal of responsibility. Also, it intertwines science and customer service, which I think is a uniquely valuable experience for someone who wants to study medicine and deal primarily with patients as a clinical doctor. For these reasons, I chose to include a significant amount of detail. My second job at the Penn State ASA office is evidence that I can perform well academically while maintaining other activities besides studying all the time.

I decided to include a Skills section because I have significant experience using lab equipment and two scientific dataloggers that we sell at Chem Scientific. Additionally, I have extensive knowledge with several computer programs that, while not applicable in medical school, will help display my learning curve. I placed skills after work experience because most of them were acquired on the job, and simply because I did not feel that it was strong enough as a final section.

Honors and activities come last because I feel that the honors section is strong, validates me including a second page, and makes a good last impression. Honors and activities go together because both of my honors are technically activities; they are organizations I joined and, either through good grades or volunteering, earned honors membership. Some lesser volunteer work was included within the detail in this section rather than under volunteer work, because I did it via those honors organizations. I included Tennis Club because it shows that I have non-academic interests, boating because it could be a good conversation starter, and basketball coach because it is simply something I enjoy.

In my personal statement I chose to tell a story first and then talk about my credentials while continuing to interweave the story. My intent was to effectively display my desire to be a doctor and show that I have what it takes. I led with the story of my grandmother’s various illnesses, and explained how watching and interacting with her doctors influenced me to become one. I think the story shows some of my intangibles that do not appear on a résumé, like my heart and motivation. It is also a true, emotional story that I think conveys my passion and excitement for a career in medicine, and hopefully can set me apart from other applicants. I believe the story shows that I have the mindset necessary to succeed as a doctor.

In the second half of my personal statement I chose to talk about my credentials to show that not only have I put in the work, but also that I know medicine is the right career for me. I wrote about my grades, how I earned them, and what my interests and motivations are in my studies. Then I discussed my volunteer experience at the Faulkner Hospital. I wanted to elaborate more on this from my résumé because I did not think bullet points told the whole story. I volunteered in the pathology lab but I also got to observe many other types of doctors, such as the cardiologists and neurologists whose jobs fascinated me the most. I also wanted to mention why I had to stop volunteering, and to show that it was not a lack of commitment but rather increased responsibility at my regular job. I want the reader to understand that my priorities are in order, and that I took being entrusted with more responsibility very seriously. The second half hopefully conveys that I know what I will be getting myself into as a doctor and believe it is the right career.

I chose to tie the story of my grandmother throughout my personal statement because I think it helps the reader get to know me better. Every applicant will have stories about volunteering at
hospitals or meeting sick patients, but I wanted to display some personality in each aspect because I think it makes the statement more valuable and unique.

My job application package is designed to market me as an eligible medical school candidate. Hopefully this memo has provided insight into my decisions and thought process when tailoring my résumé and personal statement.