Weill Cornell Medical College
Memorandum

DATE: February 3, 2012
TO: Paul Kellermann
FROM: Anita Fixx-Badly
SUBJECT: Job Application Packet

This memo provides information regarding the foundation and disciplines the Weill Cornell Medical College is based on. It describes the qualities and experiences this professional institution looks for in an applicant. A detailed rhetorical analysis explaining the content and styling choices pertaining to my resume and personal statement is also provided.

Audience Analysis: Weill Cornell Medical College

The Weill Cornell Medical College was founded in 1898 and has been affiliated with the New York-Presbyterian Hospital since 1927(1). This professional institution is a highly regarded clinical and medical research center. The medical college emphasizes the importance of education, research, and patient care. The institution’s brilliant faculty engages in world-renowned medical practice and research.

The Department of Neurology and Neuroscience at Weill Cornell Medical College is considered to be one of the best neurology departments in the world. This neurology department was built on the work of some of the greatest minds of neuroscience. The brilliant minds of R. Foster Kennedy, Harold Wolff and Fred Plum have lead this department to extraordinary breakthroughs (2). Their efforts have lead to developments in research pertaining to strokes, the human consciousness, and other neurodegenerative disorders (2). This department does extensive research in the neurosciences and is involved in teaching students disciplines encompassing both the fields of biology and psychology. The neuroscience department at Weill Cornell Medical College (WCMC) is very educationally oriented and places a great deal of emphasis on research and patient care (1).

My target audience for my resume and personal statement is the admissions committee of the Weill Cornell Medical College. I hope to stand out as an applicant that is well rounded in various disciplines with a special interest into the neurosciences. I formatted the content of my resume and personal statement in a way to show WCMC that I am qualified to be a part of a professional atmosphere as I pursue their core values of education, research, and patient care.

Job Description: Medical School Applicant

The Weill Cornell Medical College places great value in undertaking a broad range of disciplines. Courses that are required for admission include biology, chemistry, physics,
humanities areas of study. The modern practice of medicine values background knowledge from liberal arts fields such as Psychology. Students are encouraged to take courses in their area of study at an advanced level beyond general education requirements for the major. The admissions committee of this medical school also encourages foreign language proficiency.

The Weill Cornell Medical College looks for students that engage in extracurricular activities and experiences involving volunteering and the shadowing of medical professionals. Clinical experiences start during the first year of medical school, making it extremely important for applicants to participate in patient interaction before applying to WCMC (1). Enriching life experiences that have shaped an applicants decision to enter the field of medicine are also considered.

**Rhetorical Analysis:**

My resume and personal statement are tailored for applying to medical school with a specific emphasis on the Weill Cornell Medical College values and how my qualifications meet those values. The goal of the resume was to provide an easy to read format that includes my most relevant education, experience, and skills. The heading of my resume includes my home and school address, along with my email and phone number. This information makes it convenient for the admissions committee to reach me via any form of communication if any questions arise regarding my application. The objective of this resume is not provided, as this is not a job resume but a resume to gain admission to medical school. The admissions committee of Weill Cornell Medical College places great value on education, shadowing, volunteer, and research experience. All of these categories are present in my resume in bolded and capitalized font to add emphasis to these experiences. There is an equal amount of content devoted to each category.

The formatting of the education section includes the bolding of “The Pennsylvania State University” to attract attention to my undergraduate institution of study. Admissions committees view this university as an institution of high quality education so it is very important to highlight it in the resume. The University Park campus is mentioned so that there is no confusion between the multiple branch campuses of The Pennsylvania State University. My dual major of Biology and Psychology is italicized to capture the committee’s attention when reviewing my application, helping me stand out from single major applicants. The neuroscience emphasis adjacent to both degrees shows the medical college my interest in the field of neuroscience. The department of Neuroscience at the Cornell Medical College is extremely well known. By bringing attention to my neuroscience concentration of study, I hope to gain the attention of some members of the neuroscience faculty who may be reviewing the application. My GPA is provided because it is a requirement in any medical school application. The semesters I was selected for Dean’s list are highlighted below the GPA to show high standing academic achievement throughout the years. I also include my graduation date parallel to my cumulative GPA so that it is easy to spot and there is no confusion as to when I will be finished with my undergraduate studies. Relevant coursework is also indicated to show that I have taken upper division courses in both of my majors. WCMC emphasizes the importance of taking coursework beyond the general education requirements on their website. The courses are arranged into three columns, each column consisting of courses related to a different discipline. The three categories are Biological
Sciences, Psychology, and Physical Sciences. This breakdown allows the committee to easily differentiate coursework from the different majors. I also include the courses that I was a teaching assistant for, in an italicized format, to show that education is a top priority for me. This shows that I am willing to help others, which is a good quality to have. Italics are used throughout the rest of the application as well to focus the audience's attention on important volunteering and research experiences.

Research Experience is listed following the education category. My position as a research assistant is provided along with the hours spent in the cognitive psychology lab. Research is the application of classroom knowledge into real life situations. For medical school it is important to list the number of hours spent on any research, shadowing, or volunteer experience. The large number of hours spent on research indicates that I am able to handle many responsibilities while taking on an intensive school workload. By listing research that I have been a part of I show the committee that I am able to take knowledge from courses and apply it to hands-on experimentation. The research experience fits in well after education because it was conducted at The Pennsylvania State University. A brief bulleted overview of the experimentation done in the laboratory is provided to help the committee understand my interest in cognitive psychology. This research position allowed me to work with people one on one, as I conducted studies to test various hypotheses on cognition and action. This will allow the medical school committee to see my interest in research and working with people.

Shadowing Experience is listed following my educational background to show the experience I have had outside of the university. This section includes the clinical experience I have had throughout my undergraduate years by shadowing various doctors. The Cornell Medical College stresses the importance for applicants to demonstrate patient interaction and physician shadowing experience. I provide three shadowing experiences I have had in chronological order from my first to last clinical experience. This is done to show my progression of interest from internal medicine to more specialized fields of medicine. I provide all my shadowing experiences to highlight the fact that I have attained insight into many areas of the medical field ranging from internal medicine to psychiatrics. This shows that I am willing to explore many areas of medicine just like I chose to explore many disciplines of study during my undergraduate years. I provide the names, specialties, dates and locations of the shadowed physicians. The same formatting is kept for each physician to make it easier for the admissions committee to evaluate. This allows the medical school committee to see exactly during which time frame my physician shadowing took place and the time commitment allotted to each specialty. I also provide a brief bulleted list of my responsibilities and acquired knowledge beneath each specialty shadowing.

Volunteer experience is also one of the core values of the Weill Cornell Medical School. I provide the same formatting of dates and hours allotted to volunteering as I had done in the shadowing section of the resume to be consistent. By providing domestic and international volunteer experience I hope to stand out as an individual that has an interest in global medicine and other countries. Cornell Medical College has a very diverse faculty that constantly works to better global medicine. By highlighting my volunteer experience at the Burdenko General Military Clinical Hospital and the Rehabilitation Center I showed that I have had the experience of interacting with different types of patients. These patients ranged from war veterans and wounded soldiers, to stroke patients in the need of rehabilitation treatment. These volunteer
experiences were mentioned in my personal statement as well, to a greater degree. By stating that the volunteer experiences were done during my winter and summer breaks I hope to show the medical college my commitment to medicine throughout the year.

At the end of my resume I combine my Skills and Activities, to leave the audience with qualities that can distinguish me even more from other medical school applicants. Cornell Medical School emphasizes the importance of being proficient in a second language. I therefore include my fluency in Russian to the resume. I include my IRB certification to show that I am able to conduct experiments on human subjects, once again reminding the committee of my one-on-one interaction with many people throughout my research. I include my membership in the Ballroom dance club to show that I have other interests apart from medicine. At the end of the skills and activities section I include my participation in the Pre-medical society to further strengthen the idea that I am serious about becoming a medical professional. By mentioning my involvement in THON I hope to demonstrate to the committee that I enjoy helping people in every way possible, whether it be war veterans, senior citizens, or children suffering from cancer. As my final statement I let the admissions committee know that references can be provided if there are any questions in regards to my experiences.

I did not include a related work experience section because I have not engaged in paid work involving the medical profession. I have worked in a “Bar and Grill” establishment and felt that work experiences such as these added no value to my application but only distracted the audience. The medical school application places a far greater emphasis on community service and physician shadowing instead of paid positions.

The goals of my personal statement are to sell myself to the admissions committee by demonstrating my communication skills, motivation, and an understanding for what medicine really is. The personal statement had to be limited to 5,600 characters in length, including spaces, with my statement ending at 5298 characters. My personal statement begins with a pivotal experience in my life that shaped my desire to pursue the career of medicine. By guiding the audience through this emotional turning point of my life I hope to convey where my true passion in the field of neuroscience and psychology stems from. This biographical approach explains my interest in going into medicine while establishing an emotional connection with the audience. By mentioning my grandfather’s stay at the New York-Presbyterian Hospital, with which the Cornell medical college is affiliated with, I hope to demonstrate that it was this medical school that sparked my interest in becoming a doctor.

I continue my personal statement by describing the classes I have taken, going into much greater depth into the relevant coursework I provide in my resume. These courses have had an influence on my interest in neuroscience. Both the personal statement and resume mention these courses since they laid the foundation for my understanding of neurological diseases, such as the stroke that affected my grandfather. I translated the knowledge learned in my courses into helping students achieve an every day life appreciation for various biological and psychological disciplines. I briefly mention the research that I am involved in as an undergraduate to establish a connection with the medical college since it is a research oriented institution. By writing about this research in my personal statement I hoped to show my broad interest in different areas of study and my appreciation for a hands on approach to studying science.
I discuss by shadowing and volunteer opportunities in my personal statement, which relate back to the core values of the medical college. By mentioning that I was visiting my family when I volunteered during winter break I show that I understand the importance of helping everywhere I go. By mentioning my volunteer work at the rehabilitation center I make a connection back to the introduction of my personal statement. In the introduction I mention that my grandfather was also a patient in a rehabilitation facility. Just like in every paragraph this allowed me to connect my experiences to the original pivotal point that sparked my interest into medicine.

I conclude my personal statement by integrating my educational, research, and volunteer experiences back into the core values of the medical college. I mention the exact department in the Weill Cornell Medical College in which I am interested in pursuing my studies. This relates back to my dual majors and their concentrations very well. I indicate that I am aware of the research break throughs pertaining to neurodegenerative disorders that the department has done. This shows that I have done research of my own into the department and know their goals and interests when it comes to the field of medicine. Once again I bring back my first hand experience of my grandfather’s stroke to relate to the pathos of the audience.

I hope the thought process between each decision on the resume and personal statement was thoroughly explained. The goal of this application package is to present and sell myself to the Weill Cornell Medical School committee and have it serve as a basis for an interview in the admission process. The layout and content of both my resume and personal statement are specifically tailored for this professional institution. The formatting and content of the resume directs the audience’s attention to important education, research, and volunteer accomplishments that are critical to the admissions committee. The personal statement describes the vital experiences that have shaped my desire into going into medical school. By demonstrating my curricular and extracurricular preparation in the medical field I tailored my resume and personal statement to the specific needs of the Weill Cornell Medical College.

References:
