

*The following is a personal statement that was written by Laura Scoda, Class of 2010. She was accepted into multiple schools, such as UPenn, Ohio State, Michigan State, Purdue, and Tufts*

**Instructions:**

**Personal Statement (MANDATORY)**

Your personal statement should be written clearly and succinctly - 5000 characters (including spaces) have been allotted for your statement.

Discuss briefly the development of your interest in veterinary medicine. Discuss those activities and unique experiences that have contributed to your preparation for a professional program. Discuss your understanding of the veterinary medical profession, and discuss your career goals and objectives.

**Personal Statement:**

Christine scooped the lamb up behind its forelegs and held it against her chest, its back legs dangling; the lamb repaid her by sending a stream of feces down the front of her sweater. My boots squelched in the muddy hay of the barn as I walked towards the pair. She held the lamb as I quickly tented a patch of skin behind the left foreleg and inserted the needle, efficiently vaccinating against Clostridium before the lamb leaped back to the ground. This was my messy, but rewarding, first veterinary experience. The life of a veterinarian is rife with challenges and responsibilities, but the final outcome of a healthier animal is extremely rewarding. My numerous veterinary and academic experiences have primed me for the challenge of training to be an effective veterinarian.

Ever since childhood, I have wanted to bring as much happiness to animals as they bring to me. As a college student, volunteering at animal hospitals (Amboy Avenue in New Jersey and VCA Dunmore in Pennsylvania) made me realize that veterinary medicine is about a love of animals, certainly, but also about the ability to connect with others through a mutual love of animals. I found that the only thing people love to talk about more than their children is their pets; in fact, most people treat their pets as if they

were their children. I want what is best for the animals, but they do not have a say in the matter. Good communication with owners is essential.

My acquisition of communication skills began with my ardent love of performing in choir, drama, and musical theatre. In performances as in interpersonal relations, anticipating the audience's needs and being comfortable with public speaking are crucial. I later gained explanatory communication skills through my work as a Biology tutor and as a teaching assistant for Microbiology Lab. At Amboy Avenue, I utilized all of my communication skills when going over estimates with clients. I explained procedures and patiently persuaded clients to follow Dr. Murtha's course of action for their beloved pets. However, sometimes a client cannot be persuaded.

At VCA Dunmore, I learned from Dr. Michelle Falzone the importance of a balance between what is medically possible and financially feasible. A distraught client brought in a cat suffering from hair and weight loss, but was financially unable to purchase all the tests available to determine the symptoms' cause. Dr. Falzone patiently and gently walked her client through a course of action to treat the cat's symptoms and reassured her client that he was doing all he possibly could. She did not become discouraged by the setback, but instead used her dedication, determination, and understanding of her client's needs to reevaluate the situation.

My childhood, academic, and research experiences helped me become a well-rounded person who assesses situations from multiple angles. I grew up in a culturally diverse region of New Jersey and consequently gained a deep appreciation of varying perspectives. The coursework of both my Philosophy second major and English minor require me not only to consider questions from many angles, but to articulate my position

effectively. When volunteering with Professor Gary Kwiecinski as a research assistant, we constantly tweaked our procedure while learning and trying out new techniques. I prepped for and performed various histological stains, and although we reached no conclusion, I gained insight into the constantly evolving nature of research.

At Amboy Avenue I prepped and observed many procedures. A particularly moving experience was the spay surgery of a pregnant stray cat, during which Dr. Murtha aborted the developing kittens. Despite my remorse, I understand the practicality of such procedures. Veterinarians must look at a situation from all angles and determine what is best for the animal.

This principle underlies my long term interest in conservation. On a three week class trip during my sophomore year of college, I traveled to the Philippines where I visited two preserves. I snorkeled at Apo Island, a community-based marine sanctuary where the people carefully protect the area's natural resources and resident tropical ocean species. I also visited the tarsier reserve in Bohol where these tiny endangered mammals find protection. These extraordinary conservation efforts inspire my determination to work toward a zoological practice of medicine.

I also worked with exotics at Genesis Wildlife Rehabilitation Center in Scranton. I prepared meals for and cleaned the cages of tigers, mountain lions, lemurs, sloths, various primates, and different varieties of avians. I learned the workings of an exotic housing facility as well as the need to balance comfort level and caution when working with these beautiful, dangerous creatures.

My journey has strengthened my lifelong desire to be a veterinarian. I never made the decision to be a veterinarian; it is my vocation.