

The following is the personal statement written by Tiffany Butler, Class of 2010. She was accepted into multiple schools, and opted to go to the University of Pennsylvania.

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.

Ever since I can remember I have always had a passion for animals. Their beauty and ability to comfort me are only outmatched by their honesty, loyalty and faithfulness. My path to realizing that my true calling lies in veterinary medicine began when I took a life biology course in high school. In this course I realized my intrigue with animals went far beyond their cute and cuddly parts. I was interested in how they worked from the inside and realized that I should be their doctor. Ever since that first high school class I have focused my educational path in pursuit of becoming a veterinarian. I have volunteered at animal shelters, worked in clinics, shadowed veterinarians and participated in basic science research. Now that I stand at the doorstep of college graduation I cannot imagine my life if I do not attend veterinary school.

I shadowed my veterinarian Dr. Henry Nebzydowski and was amazed by his precision, immense knowledge and skill. I learned that in medicine many things can go wrong in a situation, but there are also many ways to solve problems. I loved being able to meet clients whose love for their pets was apparent. That love between an animal and its owner drew me further into the love of veterinary medicine. This shared compassion and love for animals helped me relate to clients.

Volunteering at local shelters, I gained more perspective on a career as a veterinarian. I learned how to care for abused and homeless animals and to let go of the animals I had grown to love when it was in their best interest.

While shadowing Dr. Michelle Falzone, I observed that each veterinary practice was different. Doctors bring their own personality to make each experience unique; it is never just a routine doctor's visit. I believe that I, too, will bring individuality to the field of veterinary medicine that will benefit my clients.

I obtained a job at an emergency animal hospital where the number of patients and the variety of problems presented was vastly different than daytime practices. Veterinarians have to work under time constraints and I learned about the hard choices a family often makes. At first, I thought the patient-doctor bond was absent in these cases, but the doctors make sure the connection is still present by spending time talking to clients and personally calling them to disclose test results.

I learn a great deal everyday at the emergency clinic, such as filling medications, diagnosing symptoms and caring for patients and animals in difficult situations. Seeing many prognoses, I learned that there is hope for even the worst one and that a doctor's optimism is important. Most importantly this experience taught me the value of communication skills in veterinary medicine. I have to explain procedures and calm down many patients in order to be able to understand the problems involved with their pets.

I will never forget the first time I watched a pet euthanized. Distraught, I thought for a time I would refuse to perform euthanasia in my practice. As I took in more of the doctor-patient interactions, I realized this would not be fair. The bond between a veterinarian and a pet owner becomes very important and is needed through the animal's life. The doctor, who has been there throughout the good and difficult times, needs to be there for the owner and the pet when the only choice left is to end the suffering of the animal.

For more than a year I have been interning at The Commonwealth Medical College. I am conducting a research study with Dr. John Arnott on the expression of connective tissue growth factor in osteoblasts. This experience provided me with new insights into the importance of the basic sciences and I have developed great respect for their study and place in clinical medicine. More than anything scientific research has taught me humility and that success requires tenacity. This experience has helped me grow as an individual and to find that I am capable of doing things I never dreamed. With my help, we are one step closer to figuring out the steps in the cellular pathway to bone growth and thus are closer to potentially identifying molecules that will enhance bone growth.

Veterinary medicine is a love of the science used to care and treat animals. This coincides with the compassion for and communication with pet owners. As these animals are unable to communicate as a human might, veterinarians become dependent on the owner's ability to detect and describe problems. This challenge continues to fascinate me and I look forward to devoting my life to the field of veterinary science.

Becoming a veterinarian began as a dream many years ago for me, and is now close to a reality. My dream has always been a simple one - to pursue a love I have harbored since a youth, carrying it from a fascination and love of animals, to creating a successful veterinary practice. I am ready for the next step to fulfill this dream.