**Suggestions for Writing a Statement of Purpose for Grad School**

***Your statement of purpose should portray you as:***

**Passionately interested in the field:** Demonstrated by opening with a” hook”

**Intelligent:** conveyed by the overall writing, organization, expression, etc. of your statement.

**Well-prepared academically and personally:** Well-prepared can be demonstrated by using the lingo of the field (theory, craft, etc.), describing the specific kinds of coursework and other accomplishments you have in the field.

**Able to take on the challenges of grad school :** Can be shown by describing the rigor of the work you have done.

**Able to have rapport with professors and fellow grad students — in other words, collegial:** Not particularly important but is nevertheless a factor — if you can show yourself as a generally nice and cooperative person, that will do — just be true to your own style.

**Able to finish the graduate degree in a timely fashion:** Can be conveyed implicitly by your success thus far and more explicitly if you can tell some (brief) story about adverse obstacles you have overcome.

**A potentially outstanding representative of that grad school in your future career:** Can be implied by your being an outstanding representative of your undergraduate school — for example, don't "bad-mouth" your current college or professors.

**Exercises for a First Draft**

You do not need to write detailed answers for every exercise, rather the goal is to build a pool of possible topics and points.

* What makes you unique? Different? Unusual?
* What artists, faculty or Articles have had the greatest influences on the development of your art?
* What is the single most important concept you have learned in college?
* How has your interest evolved and what specific turning points can you identify?
* What work experiences (if any) have led you to believe you want to pursue graduate education?
* How have you prepared yourself to succeed in graduate school?
* What body of relevant knowledge will you take with you?
* What personal attributes make you particularly likely to succeed in your new career?
* What is your biggest accomplishment to date?
* What are your specific postgraduate career plans?
* How will this graduate education facilitate these plans?
* What is your 5 year- goal? Your 10-year goal?

**Three Maxims of Graduate School Admissions** *by Don Asher*

* Fit and match trump grades
* Specificity plus flexibility leads to admission
* Capacity plus passion leads to admission