

How to Write a Successful Transfer Essay: A Brief Guide

It's hard to write a one-size-fits all approach for college transfer essays. Why? As Dan Nannini, Transfer Center Director at Santa Monica College, pointed out to me last week, "Every student is just so darn different."

He's right. And given the great variety of reasons for students transferring--from military deployment to simply not vibing with a particular school--it may seem impossible to create a method that can work for everyone.

But I'd like to try.

And, as with all my other resources, take this is not *The Only Way* but instead *A Pretty Good Way*.

As a transfer student wondering how to start a transfer essay, you're probably dealing with some version of this prompt:

"Please provide a statement (250 words minimum) that addresses your reasons for transferring and the objectives you hope to achieve, and attach it to your application before submission."

I happen to believe there are...

SEVEN ESSENTIAL QUALITIES OF A GOOD--NO, GREAT!-- COLLEGE TRANSFER ESSAY

1. Core values
2. Why you chose your current school (the one you're leaving)
3. Why you want to leave your current school
4. How you've made the best of things
5. What do you want to do/be/study? (What's your dream?)
6. How will the new school (the one you'd like to transfer to) help you realize your dream?
7. An ending

IMPORTANT: The key to presenting each of these qualities isn't just in WHAT you say

(your content), but in HOW you say it (your approach). What follows is a paragraph-by-paragraph breakdown of what to do and how to do it, followed by a great example personal statement—and yes, I'm suggesting you focus on establishing one quality per paragraph. Here goes:

PARAGRAPH 1 (HOW TO START A TRANSFER ESSAY): ESTABLISH SOME OF YOUR CORE VALUES

What you're trying to do here: In the opening paragraph you want to make an awesome first impression. And, given that first impressions are often established in the first 30 seconds and that this impression isn't likely to change (even when, [studies show](#), people are presented with facts that contradict their first impressions!!) your first paragraph better be on point.

How to start a transfer essay: One efficient way to make a great first impression is to focus on establishing a few core values or, if you can, the essential part of you that is suffering in your current (school) situation.

How do you identify your core values? Do [this 5 min exercise](#).

How do you decide which part of you is suffering in your current (school) situation? Well, just ask yourself, "Which part of me is suffering in my current (school) situation?" and, if you wanna' get deep, ask yourself, "Which of my deeper needs isn't being met at this school?" Click [here](#) for a list of Feelings and Needs. But here's the key: you may not want to just come out and say it, as that can be boring.



How can I express my core values in a way that's not super boring? Come up with an essence image that captures that value (or those values). In the example below, for example, the student wanted to communicate her core values of connection, intimacy, family, and listening. So she chose the dinner table:

Breakfast isn't the most important meal of the day. In my family the most sacred meal is dinner. The aroma from my mother's authentic Persian saffron and Barberry spirals around the circular dining table as we prepare to pile each other's plates high with current events, future plans, and questions about what we learned that day. Slowly, the notification bells and piercing ring tones are replaced by the clamor of metal utensils as my sisters try to fit the plates and silverware around our carefully crafted dinner table.

Each person sits the same distance from the center as we listen to my little sister's attempt at hopscotch from earlier that day with as much interest as my Dad's stories about his patient with Atherosclerosis. Listening is how we take care of one another.

Another example:

Before I could even walk, my parents instilled in me a love for history. And thanks to their passion for travel, much of my early education was experiential. At eight, I could not only recite knowledge of Corrie Ten Boom, I'd visited the house where she'd hidden Jews in her home during WWII. By 10 I'd seen the Roman Ruins just outside Paris and by 11, I'd visited Rome and Florence, and begun to develop a passion for Michelangelo. By 14 I'd climbed the caverns of Mykonos and by 16 I'd walked barefoot through India and jogged along the Great Wall of China. Though moving around wasn't always easy, travel gave me the opportunity to become more adaptable and resourceful, and I came to embrace differences as not only normal but exciting. My passion for cultural experiences and history continued in high school, and I looked forward to more experiential learning opportunities in college.

See how each example immerses us in the author's world? And note how their descriptions awaken the senses. So much more interesting than if the authors had simply said, for example, "the values that are important to me are connection, intimacy, family, and listening." Instead, each author shows us. And I'm not by the way just advocating for "show, don't tell," because you'll notice that both authors show AND tell. In the first example:

First the author **shows** the value:

Slowly, the notification bells and piercing ring tones are replaced by the clamor of metal utensils as my sisters try to fit the plates and silverware around our carefully crafted dinner table. Each person sits the same distance from the center as we listen to my little sister's attempt at hopscotch from earlier that day with as much interest as my Dad's stories about his patient with Atherosclerosis.

Then, to make sure we get it, she **tells** us what that value is:

Listening is how we take care of one another

Good form, Peetah. #HookReference #goskid



Now that's how to start a transfer essay. Okay, let's move on.

PARAGRAPH 2: EXPLAIN WHY YOU CHOSE YOUR CURRENT SCHOOL (THE ONE YOU'RE LEAVING) IN THE FIRST PLACE.

What you're trying to do here: Let the reader know how/why you are where you are. Because, y'know, the reader might wonder.

How to do this: Simply. Factually. Succinctly.

Example 1:

I originally chose Pasadena Community College because I wanted to a) stay close to home to take care of my mom, who was recovering from cancer when I graduated high school, b) save money by living at home and finishing my general ed requirements for under \$50 per credit, and c) help my dad at his TV repair business.

See how simple? Just the facts, ma'am.

Example 2:

I was obsessed with Top Chef as a kid. While most of my friends were thinking about which expensive summer program they'd attend or whether or not they should take the SAT for the sixteenth time, my mind was on how to whip eggs to create the perfect "lift" in a soufflé and developing a long term strategy to create my own food television network. So I originally chose Drake Colonial University for its Culinary Arts program. And because it was two miles from my house.

Note the specifics. Also note how the reasons are clearly different and could be bullet pointed.

Example 1:

- Wanted to be close to home (take care of mom)
- Save money
- Help dad at work

Example 2:

- Drake's Culinary Arts program
- Two miles from me

This part doesn't have to be flashy, but you could use a couple succinct examples to add a little something ("take the SAT for the sixteenth time" vs. "how to whip eggs to create the perfect "lift" in a soufflé"). Notice also how Example 2 above could serve as the opening paragraph, as it also establishes a couple core values (creativity, excellence, entrepreneurship, practicality). Which leads to an important point: Don't take this as a strict by-the-numbers guide. Take what's useful; discard the rest.

PARAGRAPH 3: OFFER SPECIFIC REASONS WHY YOU WANT TO LEAVE YOUR CURRENT SCHOOL.

Heads-up: This is probably the most important part of the essay. Why? Essentially, you're explaining to someone (a college) with whom you'd like to be in a relationship why your last relationship (with that other college) didn't work out. In short, you need to talk crap about your ex but still be really nice about it.

NO I'M KIDDING. You're not talking crap about your ex.

What you're (actually) trying to do here: You're trying to articulate, with specifics, why you want to leave your current situation.



Bye bye.

How to do this:

Three tips:

1. Consider describing your expectations and then letting the reader know whether or not those expectations were met (you don't have to do this--it's optional)
2. Use specific reasons (to avoid sounding like you're just talking crap)
3. Consider including an a-ha moment (in which you discovered something about yourself)

Let's address these one by one:

1. Let the reader know if your expectations were or were not met.

Some students want to transfer because they had a plan and it worked out, and some students transfer because they had a plan that did not work out.

The "My expectations were met and the plan worked out!" Example:

I originally chose Pasadena Community College because I wanted to a) stay close to home to take care of my mother, who was recovering from cancer when I graduated high school, b) save money by living at home and completing my general ed requirements for under \$50 per credit, and c) help my dad at his TV repair business. Achievements unlocked! Now that my mom is cancer free, I've finished my general ed requirements (with straight As!) and my dad has hired my uncle (in other words: he doesn't need me anymore), I'm ready to move on.

Notice how in this example the author seems to say, "Great! I did what I planned to do and it's time to move on." That's one way to do it. Sometimes, however, things don't work as planned—and, in this next example, it's no one's fault:

The "My expectations weren't met (and it's not the school's fault)" Example:

I originally chose Northwestern State Tech for its renowned global health program and looked forward to studying under Prof Paula Farnham, a titan in the global health world. Soon after my arrival, however, Prof Farnham took an indefinite leave of absence when she was diagnosed with early-onset Alzheimer's.

Notice how in this example things didn't go according to the author's plan, but it's not the school's fault; it's just the way things turned out. But that's not always the case, and sometimes you honestly just want out.

"My expectations were not met, this was NOT the plan (and I'm not saying it's the school's fault but honestly I just don't want to be here anymore)" Example:

Initially, Drake Colonial University stood out to me for its culinary arts program and I looked forward to working side-by-side with top-rated chefs, experimenting with gastronomy and Sous-vide and finding others who shared my geeky passion for Transglutaminase. Unfortunately, my experience after arriving differed greatly from the

one I'd imagined in at least three important ways: 1) the DCU culinary arts program was focused much more on the theory of cooking than actual cooking (all my finals last year, for example, took place in a classroom using pen and paper rather than in a kitchen); 2) access to supplies and facilities was extremely limited and most were off-limits to underclassmen, and 3) no one here had even heard of Transglutaminase.

Pulling this one off is a little trickier. Why? First of all, because there may be a lot more emotions wrapped up in your decision to transfer than in the two examples mentioned above. As a result, some part of you might honestly feel that it IS the school's fault you're so unhappy and some part of you may actually want to talk crap about the school. Here's a tip: DON'T. It won't make you look better or smarter—it'll just sound like you're complaining. Here's your greatest ally in this situation: concrete, specific reasons. Let me say this a little more boldly:

2. Provide specific evidence demonstrating how your expectations were or weren't met.

If your expectations were met, great! Just [outline your plan](#), then show how you rocked that plan—maybe even throw in something bonus that happened (and I even did it while keeping a full-time job!).

But whether your expectations were met or not, you MUST give specifics to support your points. In the example above, for example, it wouldn't be enough to say, "Unfortunately, DCU wasn't all it was cracked up to be..."

Why? We need proof! Examples! Specifics! So in that example above the author first lets us know what she expected (hands on! experimentation! other food nerds!) before letting us know specifically what she found instead: theory instead of hands-on (boo) limited access to experimentation (aw) no other Transglutaminase nerds (I am sad).

Why it can be useful to clarify what your expectations were:

1. It kinda' lets the school that you're leaving off the hook, essentially saying that it's not the school's fault entirely, it's just that you wanted something else, which makes no one the bad guy.
2. The more specific you are with exactly what you want, the easier it can be for the readers at your potential future college to imagine you on their campus (hopefully the readers will be like, "Oh! We have a great hands-on, experimental Culinary Arts program filled with food nerds!") and maybe even start to root for you (i.e. - want you to get your needs met).



Side note: Actually, I guess it is kinda' like talking about an ex, but instead of saying "He was awful because of X," you're framing it in a positive way, saying in effect, "It's not his fault, I just realized I was looking for Y." (And, hopefully, your reader will be like, "Ooh!! We have LOTS of Y at our school!") And sometimes, let's be honest, we didn't know what we were looking for until we got the opposite.

Examples:

- You didn't know how important hands-on experimentation was until you ended up in a culinary arts program where all the "cooking" tests were done with pen and paper.
- You're a girl who didn't know how important freedom to hold hands with your girlfriend in public was to you until some people at your school told you that you couldn't do that (see example essay that follows).

Just to clarify: You don't have to act like you had it all figured out before you got to your first school. You could:

3. Consider including an a-ha moment (one in which you discovered something about yourself)

Template for this:

- It wasn't until I experienced X that I realized Y [this core value] was so important to me.

Examples:

It wasn't until I sailed through my first semester with no homework and straight As that I realized how important intellectual challenge was to me.

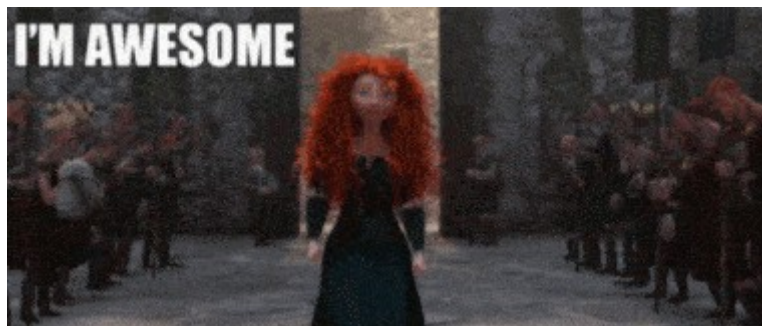
Someone once said, "We don't recognize our home until we lose it," and the same was true for me. Not until I moved 620 miles away to X school did I realize that Y school—which had been in my backyard all along, just 20 minutes from the church I was baptized in, the grandmother who raised me, and the one I love most in this world dog (my dog, Max)—was home after all.

Got the idea?

And by the way: if you don't get 100% specific here with your desires, don't worry--you'll have a chance in two paragraphs. You can keep your desires a little vague here.

PARAGRAPH 4: SHOW HOW YOU'VE MADE THE BEST OF THINGS IN YOUR CURRENT SITUATION.

What you're trying to do here: Show the reader you're not the kind of person that just rolls over when confronted with adversity or goes in the corner and pouts when you don't get what you want. Instead: how did you work to meet your needs? What did you do about it? (Note that if your expectations were met--if, in other words, this first school was all part of the plan--this is your chance to brag about all the cool stuff you've done!)



How to do this: By being creative. Positive. And by reframing everything you've been involved in since graduating high school (even the tough stuff) as preparation for your big awesome future.

Some examples of making the best of your experience at a school you're about to leave:

- There was no formal Makeup Department, so guess what. I STARTED ONE. WE'VE GOT 16 MEMBERS. BOOM.
- My classes were so much bigger than I thought they'd be AND there were no formal study groups set up, so guess what. I ORGANIZED ONE. AND I EVEN BAKED BROWNIES. #glutenfree

- There were no legit dance studios on campus OR in the dorms open after 7pm, so guess what. I PETITIONED TO LIVE OFF-CAMPUS AS A FRESHMAN, FOUND A TINY APARTMENT WITH A BASEMENT THAT OUR TEAM COULD REHEARSE IN, AND WE GOT TO WORK. #werrrrk

You get the idea. How did you make the best of a just-okay situation while you were waiting (or before you decided) to fill out your transfer application? If you're thinking that the part-time job you took, the decision to quit school, or even the Netflix shows you binge-watched wasn't ultimately preparing you for your big awesome future, you're just not thinking creatively enough—yet. Ask yourself: could it be that I was gaining other skills and values along the way? Could it be that I was doing more than just earning money (hint: learned organizational skills, or discipline, or collaboration), more than just quitting school (hint: learned to put your health first), more than just binge-watching Netflix (hint: learned how much you value productivity by being totally unproductive for three weeks straight).

[Here's a list](#) to get you thinking.

And if you're like, "Um, well, I didn't do anything," chances are that either a) you didn't really think carefully or creatively enough yet, or that b) YOU DON'T DESERVE TO TRANSFER.

I'm kidding about that last one. Kinda'. Keep thinking. This part's important.

PARAGRAPH 5: WHAT DO YOU WANT TO DO/BE/STUDY? (AKA: WHAT'S YOUR DREAM?)

What you're trying to do here: Paint the Big Picture—the vision for your life, or a dream job. Don't have one? Uh-oh. Quit now. (I'm kidding.)

How to do this: By dreaming. Ask yourself, What would a dream job be--even if it isn't your only dream job, and even if you aren't 100% certain that this is what you'd like to do--and use it as a placeholder, like these students did...

Example 1:

I'm particularly concerned about beauty waste because I am morally disturbed by the fact that my personal grooming is damaging the environment for everyone. The problem is that cosmetics are often objects of desire--we want to be pampered and we crave a luxurious experience--and packaging reflects these consumer instincts. My dream is to rally college communities nation-wide in a drive to reduce packaging waste. As a community of passionate learners and intellectuals we can spread the message to student groups in colleges that protecting the environment trumps our desire for the most wrapped-up, elaborate, expensive packaging.

Example 2:

My dream is to become a special effects makeup artist with a specialty in fantasy-based creature makeup. Through an extensive process that includes concept design, face, cowl, and body sculpting in clay, molding the pieces using liquid latex or silicon, applying the products to the human model, hand-painting and airbrushing, and fabricate addition components if necessary, I will create original characters that will be featured in movies and television shows.

I know, that's pretty specific. But again, these were written by students who weren't 100% certain that they wanted to do this--they picked something they loved and built an argument (read: essay) around it.

If it's hard for you to think in terms of careers or dream jobs, try asking one of these questions instead:

1. "What's one Big Problem I'd like to try and solve in the world?"
2. "Why do I want to go to this other school anyway?" Have you ever stopped to really articulate that? Have a friend ask you this and see what you say. And it can't be simply because it's more prestigious, or because you like living by the beach, or because you just really (like really) want to live in a big city. You need more specifics and more specific specifics. (That's not a typo.)

A Really Good Tip for This Paragraph: Think of this as a set-up for a "Why us" essay, in particular the part where you're talking about YOU... your hopes, dreams, goals, etc. Because if you can pick something specific--and even if it's a placeholder (like the examples above)--this can lead directly into the next paragraph. How? Because, once you pick a Thing you'd like to do/study/be, then you can ask yourself, "Okay, what skills/resources/classes will I need in order to do/study/become that Thing?"

For more "Why us" resources: [Click here for a three-part post on How to Write a "Why Us" Essay.](#) Or click here for a [Complete Guide to the "Why Us" Essay.](#)

To recap: In Paragraph 5, you're setting up the specifics that you're seeking. Then...



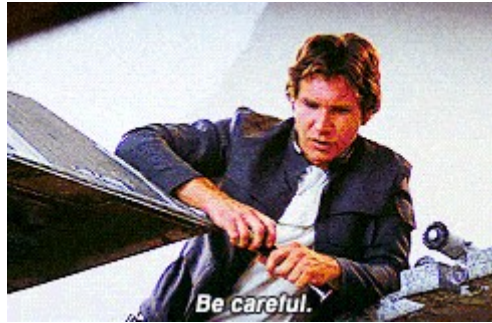
PARAGRAPH 6: OUTLINE HOW THE NEW SCHOOL (THE ONE YOU'D LIKE TO TRANSFER TO) WILL HELP YOU REALIZE YOUR DREAM.

What you're trying to do here: Depends. On what? On which of these two options you choose:

1. Write one essay for ALL the schools you're applying to. Why do this? Maybe you're short on time. Or maybe you're kinda' lazy (sorry, efficient!) and don't really see the value in writing a different essay for each school. That's fine.
2. Write a different essay for EACH of the schools you're applying to. Why do this? It shows each school you're applying to that you cared enough to spend the time researching and have really, really thought this through. I also think it gives you a better chance at WOW-ing the school and demonstrating why you're a great match.

FAQ: Can you write and submit a separate essay for each school? Yes, as of this writing (2016), Common App allows you to edit your personal statement as many times as you like. So you can write an essay for School X, then submit to School X. Then go back into your Common App, copy and paste in the essay for School Y, then submit to School Y. And so on.

WARNING: If you choose to use this method, you MUST make sure not to submit the wrong essay to the wrong school. That's a really quick way to get you into the "no" pile.



How to write one essay for ALL the schools you're applying to (Option A):

If you opt to do this, you'll want to mention the kinds of classes you'd want to take the kinds of professors you'd like to study with, etc. But I don't want to say too much more about this, as I'd actually prefer to spend more time on the other approach (Option B) because I happen to think it's a better way. So here's:

How to write a different essay for EACH of the schools you're applying to (Option B):

By researching. A lot. This paragraph is basically a mini "Why us" essay, and you'll want to include as many specifics as you can find. Click [here](#) for a list of resources. But you won't find the content for this paragraph in your beautiful amazing brain. Why? Chances are you don't KNOW yet what specific opportunities the school you're hoping to transfer offers. So go find out.

Here's a great example of what great research might yield (excerpted from the Complete Guide to the "Why Us" Essay):

A journalist cannot reach the peak of his craft if his knowledge of literature and critical thinking skills are weak, which is why I'm excited to explore what the Department of English has to offer. I look forward to courses such as 225: Academic Argumentation and 229: Professional Writing, as I believe these will provide me with a firm basis in journalistic writing technique and improve my abilities to write analytically and develop well-supported arguments. In addition, the Professional Writing course will teach me how to write in a concise, straightforward style, a skill vital to a journalist.

See how specific he is? And how he says why he wants each course? Also, notice how his separate reasons can all be bullet pointed. We could break down the paragraph above, for example, into a What I Need/What You (the school) Have list that might look like this:

WHAT I NEED:

- knowledge of literature and critical thinking skills
- a firm basis in journalistic writing technique

- ability to write analytically
- ability to develop well-supported arguments
- ability to write in a concise, straightforward style

WHAT YOU (THE SCHOOL) HAVE:

- 225: Academic Argumentation
- 229: Professional Writing
- Professional Writing course

PARAGRAPH 7: SIGN OFF.

What you're trying to do here: Close it out. Hopefully in a memorable way. But honestly it doesn't need to be amazing. It needs to be short.



Keep it short.

How to do this: Succinctly. Ask yourself: Is there anything else I need to say? Like, really need to say? Hopefully you've said it all already. If so, just close it out with 1-2 short lines.

Here are a few options that other students have used:

The "bringing it back full circle" ending:

My pulse will always race when I'm creating my grandmother's cacio e pepe for a party of eight. Yet cooking wasn't meant to be my career or my college experience. I learned I truly, deeply, profoundly love chemistry, and only through transferring to [insert school here] can I [name specific skills/resources you hope to gain], becoming a world renowned chemist specializing in global nutrient efficiency and bringing an end to world hunger.

The “my experiences made me who I am” ending:

Once I thought about it, I realized that if I hadn't dropped out, I would have never [insert formative experience here], and I would have never [insert positive value here]. Looking back on this part of my life, I realized that dropping out was actually the best decision I could have ever made.

The “I have a dream (and you can help!)” ending:

I'm inspired to continue my work spreading nutritional information and resources to low-income communities like the one I was raised in and am committed to helping create not only a healthier future for my own family, but for the larger Latino community. I believe [insert school's name] can help.

The “I'm looking for a home” ending:

Finally, the students and faculty that I met on my visit were [insert positive value here]. They made me feel that [insert college here] was a place I could call home.

Obviously don't copy these word-for-word; let these inspire you. Or write something else altogether!

My advice: Aim for the heart. But be concise.

Ready to see how it all comes together?

Here's an example essay--and I'll put tiny notes ***in bold and italics*** in between the paragraphs so you can remember what to look for.

1. Core values: experiential learning, multiculturalism, embracing differences

Before I could even walk, my parents instilled in me a love for history. And thanks to their passion for travel, much of my early education was experiential. At eight, I could not only recite knowledge of Corrie Ten Boom, I'd visited the house where she'd hidden Jews in her home during WWII. By 10 I'd seen the Roman Ruins just outside Paris and by 11, I'd visited Rome and Florence, and begun to develop a passion for Michelangelo. By 14 I'd climbed the caverns of Mykonos and by 16 I'd walked barefoot through India and jogged along the Great Wall of China.

Though moving around wasn't always easy, travel gave me the opportunity to become more adaptable and resourceful, and I came to embrace differences as not only

normal but exciting. My passion for cultural experiences and history continued in high school, and I looked forward to more experiential learning opportunities in college.

2. Why she initially chose X school

One of the things that initially attracted me to Biola University was the Torrey Honors program. I also appreciated the welcoming attitude of its students, and, initially, its emphasis on Judeo-Christian values. But the past year and a half has given me time for introspection, and I have begun to see that Biola and I are not the best match.

3. A polite articulation of why she and the school are not the best match

I believe, for example, in the freedom to express love for whomever one chooses. But on at least one occasion at Biola I've been reported to my resident director for displaying physical affection toward another girl and have been told I could risk expulsion if we were "caught" in the act. I also believe that one should be free to express her spiritual beliefs in any way she chooses. At Biola, however, students are required to attend a minimum of 30 chapel events, and must pay upwards of \$300 if this requirement is not met. I'm also interested in a diversity of perspective, but faculty are required to teach through a Biblical lens, and over 90% of the students in my department (Anthropology) are seeking to do missionary work following graduation. Finally, I didn't feel the Torrey Honors Program provided the kind of experiential learning environment I was looking for.

4. How she made the best of things--and learned some great lessons and skills!

Two highlights of my time at Biola included debate, and the experience of founding BQU, a safe, but underground group for queer students. Working with the debate team has taught me how to be accountable for my own work and more humble in my losses. Working with BQU has shown me not only the necessity of being vulnerable with others, but has also taught me skills in creating a group constitution, designing a website, and advertising our cause in a non-inflammatory way.

5. What she wants to do (a.k.a.: the dream)

I've always been interested in psychological or environmental root of motives, and I see myself one day working in public policy. I'm seeking science and social science departments that offer both excellent research facilities and opportunities for practical application.

6. How she'll pursue her interests at her new school: a mini "Why us" essay

I am interested in the debate team at Fordham because its Jesuit tradition inspires an intellectually rigorous environment. While my current team is very skilled, it does not fulfill my intellectual values; I want classmates who want to explore controversial topics despite their personal stances, and who want to take debate as seriously as their social lives. My desire to explore diversity is also reflected in my major (Anthropology), and draws me to the Irish Studies department. I am personally looking to revive my cultural heritage, and I am also interested in helping oppressed cultures thrive. I see a need to promote how Celtic culture shaped current American society, and want to explore the gender roles of early Celtic culture.

7. And we're out.

Although my time at Biola has been challenging, it has given me time to discover my own values, ethics, and priorities. I am ready to find a place where I can feel at home, and Fordham is a place where I can picture myself reading Nietzsche in my dorm room or working on progressive debate resolutions with the squad. I hope to contribute my interests and values to the Fordham tradition.

For what it's worth, here's an alternate ending that she wrote for another school (Haverford):

Because of my childhood--learning history experientially through travel--I am hoping for a similar style of learning through my college experience. I believe that Haverford can provide this through its independent college programs, bi-college programs, and Ex-Co. My interests in criminology, environmental public policy, and gender studies are not normally included in traditional learning. I hope to take advantage of courses that exist outside of a strict department, such as Epidemiology and Global Health, which "examines the interplay of biomedical, societal and ethical concerns in global health." This is important to me, because as a current anthropology major, I believe it is important to take into consideration all aspects that affect decision making in government and humanitarian efforts. Restorative Justice: A Path to Criminal and Social Justice is also a class that piques my desire to promote rehabilitation of the incarcerated population. Because I understand that social systems are intertwined, my interest into other topics grew. Furthermore, I am interested in advocating for the LGBTQ community in relation to the legal system. I wish to take Haverford's bi-college program in gender and sexuality in order to view criminology from an LGBTQ lens.

As a student who intertwines academics with extracurricular involvement, I am impressed by the Ex-Co's ability to provide learning opportunities outside of class. Additionally, I am drawn to extracurriculars that can also increase my knowledge of the

world, such as the Debate Team. While Haverford' current team is out of commission, I hope to get it up and running, and give students another place to speak their opinions confidently. As a member of the LGBTQ community myself, I am looking forward to a place where I can openly express myself, not only in a social arena--through the QDG--but also in a political arena--through the SAGA. The two women's centers also address these two important needs, one a need for activism, the other a need for a safe space, including that for male feminists. As an individual with various networks, it will be nice to continue having a religious community, but Grace Covenant Church Fellowship appears to be more inclusive than the one I have previously been involved with, as well as providing an opportunity to expand my own network to other schools in the area.

Because of my focus on activism, I was impressed by Haverford's Honor Code and the Plenary. These encourage students to acknowledge the importance of civic involvement, and inspire students to improve campus policy. This particularly appeals to me as a student who feels my voice is currently not heard at Biola University. I hope to contribute ideas on how the school can help students continue to feel part of the community and celebrated for their differences.

For those wondering, this student ultimately ended up at Reed College in Portland. She's very happy there.



And why shouldn't she be? Nice campus, right?

What should you do next?

Before you begin writing your essay, ask yourself:

1. Is there a way I can visit the campus(es) of the school I'd like to attend?
2. Can I set up an interview with an admission officer from the school(s)--either in person or via Skype? (Call or email the school to find out.)

If yes to either, you can use the info you gather there in the "Why us" portion of the essay.

If no to both...

Copy and paste these questions somewhere and begin your essay...

1. What are my [core values](#)? In particular: which ones are suffering most in my current situation? (But don't say that they're suffering yet--just stick to the positive in your first paragraph.)
2. Why did I choose my current school (the one I'm leaving)?
3. Why do I want to leave my current school?
4. What are the specific things I've done to make the best of things?
5. What do I want to do/be/study? (aka: What's my dream? Or: What's one big problem I'd like to solve in the world?)
6. What specific skills and resources will I gain at this new school that will help me in realizing my dream?
7. What else do I need to say before signing off?

If there's nothing left to say, just sign off.

Like this.

