Crafting Your Law School Personal Statement

Charles Roboski
Assistant Dean of Admissions and Financial Aid, Michigan State University College of Law
Topics to be covered:

• Application-review process and the role of the Personal Statement
• Recommendations
• Personal Statement Examples
• Your Questions
Questions Asked by Law College Admission Committees

1. Does this candidate have the ability to succeed academically at our law school?  
   LSAT and academic record are primary; LoRs are secondary

2. What qualities, skills, or experiences does this applicant possess that we consider to be important to the study/practice of law?  
   Personal statement and resume are primary

3. How does this candidate compare to others?  
   Impact of National and School’s pool
The Role of the Personal Statement

Serves in place of an in-person interview

• Insights about you beyond past academic performance
• Allows the reviewer to learn about who you are and why you might be a good addition to the incoming class

The personal statement also might be relied on:

• as an indicator of your writing ability
• as a reflection of your motivation and/or your interest in law school
• when awarding scholarship assistance
Suggestions as You Prepare Your Personal Statement

- Ask what 3 or 4 “points” you would like to communicate to the reviewer
- Keep in mind your audience and what decision they will be making
- Consider how your personal statement will complement your resume and other components of your application
- Carefully review application instructions for the schools you are applying to...if there are no assigned topics, are there any prompts?
• Set the goal of a writing a compelling opening paragraph
• No need for creativity, but strive for authenticity
• Make it a quality piece of writing and ensure that it is error free!
• Include one paragraph that describes your reason(s) for applying to the law school
Possible Topics

- What skills, talents, or abilities do you have that will allow you to be an outstanding law student or lawyer?
- What people, events, or institutions have shaped you and how?
- How have you arrived at the decision to earn a law degree?
- What are your professional goals as an attorney?
- If you have had significant life experiences or hardships, how might these experiences (and your response to them) affect how you will contribute to the classroom or the profession?
1. Role played by the personal statement, who your reader(s) is, what goals they have in learning more about you
2. It’s your story...make it authentic
3. You’ve got precious “real estate” – be sure to prioritize
4. Simply mistakes reflect poorly on you and will detract from the substance of your message
5. Use a supplemental statement, if one is needed