Sample Statement of Purpose: MBA

The term "globalism" has become overused, and often misused. In fact, we might say that it has actually been devalued to the level of the everyday language of buzzword-brandishing marketing pundits. Such freewheeling usage has perhaps prompted many a CEO (or future CEO) to launch into a global plan or strategy without proper consideration of the demands and dynamics of the international marketplace. Many would-be globetrotters neglect the acquisition of language skills, knowledge of foreign trade and tax laws, accounting standards, etc., all of which are necessary to effectively "go global." Superficial knowledge only leads to failure.

This has, indeed, happened, and while there is no doubt that neglecting to capture the gains achievable in overseas markets is equally suicidal, misguided attempts at competing globally (along with rapidly developing opportunities in the global marketplace) have placed a dramatic premium on individuals who take the time to properly train themselves in international business. For me, the Columbia MBA is a significant component of this training.

I foresee my own career moving in the direction of European/American business, initially from an advisory perspective (i.e. investment banking or consulting) and ultimately from a leadership role within a manufacturing entity, preferably a start-up venture. This prophecy, in part, has evolved from my past experiences in western and eastern Europe which, in turn, have formed my opinions about certain opportunities that should emerge in the future: there should be, with a good degree of certainty, immense windfall gains and comparative advantages for US-trained/thinking business leaders and managers in the European markets in the coming years. This foresight along with my personal entrepreneurial bent and an affinity for finance will play a large role in the evolution of my career.

One particular theory that states that students who travel and study overseas return greatly transformed in outlook and perspective. I am no different, and it is easy to imagine how witnessing first-hand the revolutions in Eastern Europe (while studying in Budapest in the fall of 1989) would impact my future plans. The overall ramifications of the fall of the "Red Empire" were at that time to me quite apparent (i.e. the end of the bi-polar global political structure, etc.), and it was quite obvious that lacking any kind of international capabilities (languages, experience, etc.) would greatly hinder anyone's career in the long run. Therefore, since graduating in 1991, I have tried to maintain a balance of technical knowledge accumulation and international work experience. Thus far, I think I have been quite successful.

My year at Kidder, Peabody had its compulsory eighty-hour weeks which, indeed, provided a solid technical foundation in corporate finance and capital markets. However, the scope of the company was somewhat limited internationally, hence my job change to Deutsche Girozentrale -Deutsche Kommunalbank (DGZ) in Frankfurt, Germany. This was a career shift that was a bit off the beaten path but was international and provided excellent exposure to the European capital markets and to the internal management/corporate culture of a staunch and traditional German institution. The job was also naturally conducive to achieving full-fluency in German. My current position has allowed for a continuum of international corporate finance exposure (about 90% of Vereinsbank's clients are central or eastern European) as well as solid technical and quantitative training in corporate finance.

Over the course of my experiences both in the US and Europe I have made a discovery that, while nothing new, creates a macro rationale for my career plans. As most of us know, there exists today a seemingly unalterable persistence of bureaucracy, risk-aversion and time consuming decision making procedures amongst European enterprises, a fundamental difference to their aggressive American counterparts. For any American-trained business leader, this represents an opportunity.

The now-ending world recession in tandem with rapidly increasing global competition (both of which, incidentally, have prompted a restructuring of US industry) has forced European governments to strongly consider more open markets. That's also nothing new. However, it seems that the recession was not long

enough to force a concurrent inward reflection amongst European business leaders. As a result, many European private sector entities have maintained their bureaucratic habits, but ultimately face increased competition in their own domestic markets. Unfortunately for them, they are losing and should continue to lose (the recent utter domination of US investment banks in Germany over the long-standing domestic "superbanks" as a result of the recent liberation of the financial markets is a case in point).

This is, obviously, an opportunity. As more and more Europeans continue their tradition of bureaucracy management, there will be an ever-increasing demand for US-trained business operators (who, by the way, traditionally perform well in laizes fairre market environments) as more and more international companies (US and non-US) move into Europe. My objective is to capitalize on this opportunity.

However, just from simple observation, I have discovered that an MBA provides a distinct advantage over those without. There is an analytical nature inherent to MBA's which I believe is duplicable only by committing two years to the academic study of business. And, in light of my international bent, there is no doubting that Columbia is quite appropriate for my purposes.

My father once told me, "life, like baseball, is a game of inches. So practice, practice, practice before stepping onto the field, life included." I guess he meant prepare before embarking upon the real thing. The MBA, for me, would be a source of "practice, practice, practice," and based on my observations of Columbia MBAs in action and on the reputation of the school internationally, a Columbia MBA would be perfect "spring training," so to speak...

Statement of Purpose: Ph.D. (Economics)

When introduced to economics in high school I realized that it interestingly qualified as a subject of both Arts and Science. It was an area defined by precise rules, principles and axioms and yet there was tremendous scope for self-expression in the form of interpretation and analysis. This facet of economics intrigued me very much and I decided to pursue further studies in Economics.

During my Master's program I equipped myself as best as I could, with various tools used in economic analysis. I obtained rigorous training in mathematics, econometrics and game theory. After completing the Master's program, I joined National Institute of Public Finance and Policy, as I was very eager to see how one might use economics to tackle real life problems, where simplified models, and assuming away of problems may offer no respite. I did some very interesting work here, which is described in my resume. I want to delve deeper into the subject to be able to carry out independent research and analysis, hence my decision to join the Ph.D. program at UCLA.

International Economics is an area I would really like to explore. I am fascinated by game theoretic modeling of issues pertaining to International Economics. I believe that game theoretic models can be effectively used in international economics as many policy issues such as negotiations over mutual reductions in tariffs, formation and preservation of customs unions, establishment of cartels in the case of internationally traded goods, all have some game theoretic character.

The current "Regionalism versus Multilateralism" debate holds its own attraction. It should be interesting to analyze the trade diversion effects of Preferential Trading Agreements and also their impact on multilateral institutions like GATT. The strategic trading that takes place in foreign exchange markets and the variety of auction like mechanisms that have been used for foreign exchange trade, especially in developing countries, are intriguing.

During my graduate studies I aim to equip myself with some advanced tools and develop my analytical and research capabilities. I want to get an excellent command over econometrics to be able to confront stochastic statistical data with exact models of economic theories and also for empirical verification of other models, which might otherwise be set in a partial equilibrium framework. I expect to emerge as an economic engineer and an expert in model building. Econometrics per se, also interests me as a subject of economics and I might like to research in econometric methodology. I want to be an academic economist. I have cleared the National

Eligibility test conducted by the University Grants Commission of India, which makes me eligible to teach an undergraduate course in economics in any Indian university.

I want to study at UCLA, as it emphasizes on the rigor and analytical tools that are necessary for academic research. I have well-developed analytical and mathematical skills and I want to exploit these skills to the greatest extent. I feel the help and guidance that can be provided to me by the distinguished faculty of your university will be invaluable. I am sure if I am given the opportunity to study at your university that attracts some of the best students from all over the world, it will provide an environment competitive enough to bring out the best in me.

Statement of Purpose: Civil Engineering

In this essay I outline my academic and extra-curricular accomplishments. Also discussed are my career objectives and the motivation to pursue the graduate program in Civil Engineering at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst.

The undergraduate curriculum in Chemical Engineering at IIT, Kharagpur, introduced me to a wide gamut of subjects, both in and outside the field. Various courses like Mass Transfer, Heat Transfer, Fluid Mechanics and Transport Phenomena have provided me with a strong footing in the theoretical concepts of Chemical Engineering.

It was the field of Environmental Technology which particularly captured my interest. The desire to delve deeper into this subject persuaded me to take elective courses in Industrial (Air) Pollution Control, Non-conventional Energy Engineering and Environmental Earth Sciences. While offering both depth and breadth across this field, these courses put into perspective the importance and relevance of Chemical Engineering and the application of its fundamentals to environment related problems. I came to realize that although traditionally Environmental Studies has been under the domain of Civil Engineering, the increasing complexity and magnitude of Environmental problems have resulted in a growing need for the services of disciplines other than Civil Engineering.

During the eight week Summer Training at the Development Consultants Ltd.,I was assigned to the Cement Cell, where I received a detailed knowledge of the cement manufacturing processes. As an Industrial Intern, I was assigned a project on Cement Plant Design (1800 TPD), which encompassed Raw-Mix Design and Capacity Calculations for various equipment. Here, I got acquainted with the Pollution and Energy Conservation problems faced by the Cement Industry and devoted a significant portion of my project to the pollution abatement methods.

My final year dissertation was on the Manufacture of Phosphoric acid from rock phosphate using Sulfuric acid (Design of 100 tpd Plant). This covered the design of Reactor, Extractor (for acid purification) and Evaporator (for acid concentration). As a natural outcome of my interest in Pollution control, adequate emphasis was provided to waste gases and waste water treatment which involved off-gas scrubbing (venturi design) and discharge method details, gypsum disposal methods, disposal of fluosilicic acid as waste material and the incorporation of all these in the Plant Layout/flow-sheet.

At IIT, Kharagpur, I have received the best possible undergraduate education in Chemical Engineering in India. Throughout, my scholastic records and achievements have been outstanding. I have consistently ranked in the top 2% of the students of my class, in school, and consider the high point of my achievements as being ranked in the top 1% of more than one lakh students who wrote the Joint Entrance Examination for admission to one of the six Indian Institutes of Technology.

Throughout my school and undergraduate education, I have been a keen participant in extra-curricular activities. Getting elected as the School Pupil Leader (Head Girl) helped me hone my organizational and interpersonal skills. At IIT, I have been involved in the Annual cultural Fest as Head of the Control Tent Team. I have also taken active part in dramatics and made my contribution to the Technology Dramatics Society (English chapter) at IIT, as its member and later as the Governor. I was also the member of the NSS at IIT

where I had the opportunity to be involved in it's Literacy and Health & Nutrition Programs. I continue to be a member of the Helpage Society of India, which provides palliative care to the terminally ill cancer patients.

The years of undergraduate education have been an enriching experience - both academically and otherwise, and I am determined to maintain the high levels of excellence throughout my career. My immediate degree objective is an M.S in environmental engineering – a rapidly evolving field with an immense potential for research. I wish to follow it up with a Ph.D, to pursue a career in research and experience the excitement and satisfaction of being at the forefront of this vast expanding field.

An extremely distinguished faculty, a milieu replete with academic activity, and a graduate program which blends high quality course work and research facilities at the cutting edge of every sub-field are the factors which have motivated me to choose the University of Massachusetts, Amherst for graduate studies. I believe the program offered will help me acquire the versatility needed to reach my full potential as an engineer.

It would, therefore, be a privilege to be able to secure admission to pursue graduate studies, with adequate financial assistance at U. Massachusetts, Amherst. I am confident that I will match the high standards set by your university.

http://www.infozee.com/application-issues/essays-sop.htm

Writing a Statement of Purpose

Determine your purpose in writing the statement. Usually the purpose is to persuade the admissions committee that you are an applicant they should choose. You may want to show that you have the ability and motivation to succeed in your field, or you may want to show the committee that, on the basis of your experience, you are the kind of candidate who will do well in the field. Whatever the purpose, it must be explicit to give coherence to the whole statement. Pay attention to the purpose throughout the statement so that extraneous material is left out. Pay attention to the audience (committee) throughout the statement. Remember, your audience is made up of faculty members who are experts in their field. They want to know that you can think as much as what you think.

Determine the content of your statement. Be sure to answer any direct questions fully. Analyze the questions or guidance statements for the essay completely and answer all parts. For example: "What are the strengths and weaknesses in setting and achieving goals and working through people?" In this question there are actually six parts to be answered 1) strengths in setting goals, 2) strengths in achieving goals, 3) strengths in working through people, 4) weaknesses in setting goals, 5) weaknesses in achieving goals and 6) weaknesses in working through people. Pay attention to small words. Notice: This example question says through people not with people, if it says with people, answer that way.

Usually graduate and professional schools are interested in the following: (1) Your purpose in graduate study. This means you must have thought this through before you try to answer the question. (2) The area of study in which you wish to specialize. This requires that you know the field well enough to make such decision. (3) Your future use of your graduate study. This will include your career goals and plans for your future. (4) Your special preparation and fitness for study in the field. This is the opportunity to relate your academic background with your extracurricular experience to show how they unite to make you a special candidate. (5) Any problems or inconsistencies in your records or scores such as a bad semester. Be sure to explain in a positive manner and justify the explanation. Since this is a rebuttal argument, it should be followed by a positive statement of your abilities. (6) Any special conditions that are not revealed elsewhere in the application such as a large (35 hour a week) work load outside of school. This too should be followed with a positive statement about yourself and your future. (7) You may be asked, "Why do you wish to attend this school?" This requires that you have done your research about the school and know what its special appeal is to you. (8) Above all

this, the statement is to contain information about you as a person. They know nothing about you that you don't tell them. You are the subject of the statement.

Determine your approach and the style of the statement. There is no such thing as "the perfect way to write a statement." There is only the one that is best for you and fits your circumstances.

There are some things the statement should not be: Avoid the "what I did with my life" approach. This was fine for grade school essays on "what I did last summer." It is not good for a personal statement. Equally elementary is the approach "I've always wanted to be a ____." This is only appropriate if it also reflects your current career goals. Also avoid a statement that indicates your interest in psychology is because of your own personal psychotherapy or a family member's psychological disturbance. While this may have motivated many of us to go on to graduate study in psychology, this is not what your audience is necessarily looking for in your statement.

These are some things the statement should do: It should be objective yet self-revelatory. Write directly and in a straightforward manner that tells about your experience and what it means to you. Do not use "academese" or jargon. It should form conclusions that explain the value and meaning of your experiences such as: (1) what you learned about yourself; (2) about your field; (3) about your future goals; and (4) about your career concerns. It should be specific. Document your conclusions with specific instances or draw your conclusions as the result of individual experience. See the list of general Words to Avoid Using without Explanation listed below. It should be an example of careful persuasive writing.

Considerations about form: Keep to the page limit! Reviewers have to read hundreds of these applications, don't overburden them with extra pages. Do not leave in typographical errors. You don't want to be taken less seriously due to a typo, rite? (laugh)

Words to avoid using *without explanation*:

appealing to me	fascinating	incredible	rewarding
appealing aspect	feel good	interesting	satisfaction
appreciate	gratifying	invaluable	satisfying
challenging	helpful	it's important	significant
enjoy	helping people	meaningful	stimulating
enjoyable	I can contribute	meant a lot to me	useful
exciting	I like it	people	valuable
excited	I like to help	remarkable	

Getting Started. Recalling and analyzing experience - write short paragraphs on the following:

• Pick a memorable accomplishment in your life. What did you do? How did you accomplish it?

• What sort of important activities have you engaged in? With whom? what role did you play?

• What work experiences have you had? What was your job? responsibility? How did you carry it out? Now look over your paragraphs. What skills and qualities do you see that you possess? For example, consider working with others. Were you a leader? important "team" player? Looking at what you have found, you can now look for skills and qualities that will help you in graduate school. What factors stand out? (NOTE: You will undoubtedly have more material than you can use. This is good, but you need to make strategic choices.)

Your career goals:

• What career have you chosen? What factors formed this decision?

• What evidence shows that this is a correct choice? That is, how can you show that this choice is realistic? (Personal experience in the field is a good place to begin.)

Don't:

• Criticize, state opinions that could be offensive, make political statements or raise religious issues

• Be flippant or "cute." Be careful about using humor

• Write a laundry list or catalog of achievements

• Tell them what they already know about their program or profession

- Say you "always" wanted to be a…
- Fake it or have someone else write it
- Write something overly sentimental
- Overly self-promote; understatement is good

Things to Keep in Mind: What they read between the lines: motivation, competence, potential as a graduate student. Emphasize everything from a positive perspective and write in an active, not a passive voice. Demonstrate everything by example; don't say directly, for example, that you're a persistent person, you must demonstrate it. You don't want to make excuses, but you can talk about the mistakes you've made as a learning experience. If there is something important that happened (poverty, illness, excessive work, etc.), which affected your grades go ahead and state it, but write it affirmatively, that is, in a way that shows your perseverance. Make sure everything is linked with continuity and focus.

The Introduction. This is where you tell them what you want to study. For example, I wish to pursue a MS degree in Mechanical Engineering with an emphasis in controls.

Part 2: Summarize what you did as an undergraduate Important class or classes you took which stimulated your desire for graduate study, such as a specific project for a class. Research you might have done Indicate with whom, the title of the project, what your responsibilities were, and the outcome. Write technically, professors are the people who read these statements. Work experience, especially if you had any kind of responsibility for testing, designing, or researching a product or apparatus.

Part 3: If you graduated and worked for a while and are returning to grad school, indicate what you've been doing while working: company, work/design team, responsibilities, what you learned. You can also indicate here how this helped you focus your graduate studies.

Part 4: Here you indicate what you want to study in graduate school in greater detail. This is a greater elaboration of your opening paragraph. Indicate area of interest, then state questions you might have which are associated with the topic, i.e. what you might be interested in studying. You should have an area of emphasis selected before you write the statement. Call the department or look on the web for information about the professors and their research. Are there professors whose interest's match yours'? If so, indicate this, as it shows a sign that you have done your homework and are highly motivated. (Be sincere, however, don't make up something bogus just to impress people.)

End your statement in a positive and confident manner with a readiness for the challenges of graduate study.

Questions to address in an SOP: What experiences and/or education have made you want to pursue this degree program? When did you first become interested in this field of study? How have you been pursuing your interest (e.g., education, volunteer work, professional experience)? What most appeals to you about this program -- in general (i.e., the field of study) and more specifically (i.e., the particular department or school's program)? What makes you and your interests a good fit? What do you plan to do with the education you hope to receive? What do you think is the most interesting or notable thing about you? How do you think it might relate to the program that you want to pursue? How could you use it as a jumping off point or organizational device for your essay? Describe how your experience, education, goals, and anticipated experience in a graduate program connect to the idea (perhaps using the questions above as a guide). Generate a list of things you might want to include in your essay, using the questions above to guide you if necessary. For any general items, jot down specific details: Which items overlap? Do you notice any themes or patterns that might help to unify your essay? Try grouping items that seem to go together. What do you think they illustrate about you and your educational goals?

Writing a draft: From outline to essay. Now that you have a sense of what you want to write about, draft your essay. Make an outline. What will the main theme be? What points do you want to be sure to include? If you already have a draft written, use this space to jot down the organization of your essay based on what you've already written.

Develop your body paragraphs with example and explanation Try developing examples and explanations for one statement that you'd like to make about your experience or interest in this program. Be on the lookout

for those cut-and-pastable sentences and replace them with details that show, rather than tell.

Introductions matter. Once you have a good sense of your essay's focus, try writing an introduction that will engage your reader and suggest the direction in which your essay will go. Not every essay has to have a clever or original introduction. One which is straightforward and to the point can also be effective and may, in some cases, be what a particular program wants to see. Most important is its effectiveness in setting a tone and direction for what follows. Take a look at these sample introductions.

condensed from:
http://www.sjsu.edu/faculty/gcallaghan/graduate/winningstatement.htm
http://www.careerservices.calpoly.edu/Students/Colleges/personal_statement.htm
http://www.coe.berkeley.edu/cues/grad.purpose.html
http://www.wisc.edu/writing/Handbook/apessay.html