

## ***Transfer Planning Guide: A Student's Guide to Writing a Successful Transfer Essay***

These sample transfer essays were all written by students who were admitted to the schools for which these essays were written.

### **BE SPECIFIC:**

- **Stay close to the prescribed topic.** It's great to be creative, but don't forget about the parameters you need to follow. The essence of a successful essay is one in which you can communicate your claims while captivating the reader. Step outside of the box and think around it without forgetting to acknowledge that it is there.
- **Answer the question clearly.** Even if you choose an alternative approach to writing a transfer essay, there will come a point when you will need to explicitly state an answer to the question. The admissions committee wants to see you develop ideas, but they also want to know you're capable of being concise when it matters. Besides, the essay is a reflection of you and your thought process—if it is unclear or confusing, they will assume that is how you function cognitively.
- **A logical progression of thought and argument needs to be evident from reading your essay.** The object is to be able to communicate effectively through a written work in order to demonstrate to the admissions committee that you are successful in expressing your thoughts. This will also demonstrate that you've thought about this essay thoroughly and given the school your time and attention.

### **STAY FOCUSED:**

- **Remember why you're writing this.** Keep in mind the main purpose of the transfer essay relative to the entire application: revealing the attitudes, personality, and insights of the student who is writing. They already know who you are academically, now they're interested in what type of person you are and what qualities will make you fit into the student body while exalting your capacities as an individual.
- **Stand apart from applicants from other schools.** You're a student of Miami Dade College, the largest two-year institution in the United States that provides students of all ages and ethnicities with an opportunity to become successful. Use the experience with diversity to build your multicultural identity as a student and express how it has impacted you, mainly with regard to intellectual growth and open-mindedness. Your experiences with varying groups will always be an advantage. Use the fact that you are a transfer student to your advantage.
- **Make yourself marketable.** Show them the skills you possess, or the specific abilities you excel in; these will be an asset to their institution, so they will be compelled to choose you over another student. They're making an investment by giving you a spot in their student body, it's an opportunity to prove that you'll uphold the university's reputation and maintain their high standards long after you've graduated, in the professional sphere.
- **Refrain from getting lost in excess.** Being creative doesn't mean writing a descriptive novel; discern how much is necessary to illustrate your idea or situation but don't exceed it. Remember that you need to explain your goals or elaborate upon the points you made previously; it's not all about your story.
- **Don't feel obliged to push the word limit.** If you can state what you want to communicate in 650 words and the word limit is 750 words, don't feel compelled to continue writing. Excess is never positive; using filler words, excessive adjectives, or pointless sentences will hurt your essay. Only use what is necessary; excess will hurt your essay.

### **MAINTAIN READERS' INTEREST:**

- **Find the best way to express yourself and develop the essay in the form you feel most comfortable**

**with**, as well as one that is exciting to read and engaging. Writing an essay in the fashion you would for a composition course isn't enough; admissions committees see far too many of these to have the desire to read any more. (Examples provided at the end of this document.)

- **Narrative:** For some students, it's easier to write a narrative that engages the readers, much like a storybook or a novel would entertain children and adults. This is a fun way to illustrate your ideas and keep the essay flowing naturally. Instead of saying "I am the best candidate you'll come across because I am dedicated, hard-working, and intelligent; I advocate for service programs and possess leadership qualities that are invaluable," which sounds pretentious and self-glorifying, you can express these through a scenario that demonstrates your skills.
- **Humor:** Likewise, some students find that humor is the best way to captivate an audience and feel capable of writing a successful essay that uses comedy to keep the reader engaged. However, if you are not comfortable with this style of writing or feel that you have not used it effectively, you might reconsider using this approach. It varies by the subject matter of the essay, your ability to be funny but not obscene or cute, and your use of the humor.
- **Experiential:** It helps develop the essay through the eyes of someone who has gone through a specific experience, overcome a challenge or passed through a difficult situation. This focuses on applying what has been learned from the experience to your personal life, academic life, or aspects. It will highlight your character growth, maturity, and ability to overcome obstacles. The admissions committee will see the application of these qualities in your work presently and evaluate how they will reflect in your future performance. Never paint yourself as a helpless victim or try to make them pity you—this will work adversely.
- **Risk:** There may be one essay you decide to take a risky approach to, gauging by how much the school values bold students. This kind of essay takes an approach that's novel and refreshing. Don't fall into the trap of over-thinking this essay, premeditating what others would write, and trying too hard to be unique. A risk should be taken with an essay when there are two supplements and you feel strong about the one you have already written.
- **Combination:** This will most likely be the style you choose to write your essay in. It incorporates some aspects of the previous forms and allows you to include an explanatory section. If you don't feel comfortable writing an entire narrative, or feel that your experiential piece isn't fully expressing the points you intend to make, this is the approach to take. It isn't to be used with a risky essay, since that's a wild card and this is the essay format that resembles the most commonly written first-year essays.
- **Interaction:** Another common form of the transfer essay is the interactive type, in which the student doesn't simply answer the question but expands upon their ideas by using literary devices sparingly. The tone of the essay should be academic, but relaxed. Although this seems to be a paradox, it's possible to write an essay that is both intellectually stimulating, displaying your knowledge and careful thought, as well as interesting to read and easy to engage. The goal with this essay is to exhibit your ability to communicate with different audiences and express yourself without being overbearing or trying too hard to seem smart.

## **PROOFREAD:**

- **You can't afford errors.** Not only is it important to proofread what you have written for minor spelling errors or inaccuracies with the punctuation, it is imperative to check grammar, syntax, and diction. These should be examined closely to ensure you have written the most efficient essay.
- **Let it go for a day.** Give the essay a rest after you've written it and then pick it up a few days/weeks later. This will help you pick out mistakes, awkward statements, and cut what is unnecessary or develop unfinished ideas and other parts that seem lacking. Obviously, you're either going to be extremely satisfied or extremely disappointed with the results of your writing immediately after you finish, since you've been working on it for so long. Once you detach yourself for a day, you'll be able to better evaluate it objectively.
- **Ask your professors for help.** If there are professors you usually go to for help, support, questions, or are just on good terms with, ask them to do you a favor and look through your essay. Remember to do this politely and present them with the essay weeks or months in advance; be respectful. The more time you give them, the more time they have to dedicate to it, the better quality the feedback will be, and the more drafts you can write and re-submit. Keep in mind professors have many classes and extra-curricular engagements as well. This process, additionally, will help you create a closer bond with your professor, and maybe they might help you with recommendation letters, too.
- **Go to your friends for advice.** Friends know you better than you might think. If they sense you're being too false, or that your stories are forged too obviously, they will let you know. Even if you embellish upon a few

areas, that is acceptable; creating a mirage, however, will most likely get you denied, not accepted. Don't tell admissions what you think they want to hear, because most people do that and are not successful. Your friends will know this and try to give you their honest opinion.

- **Don't be afraid to ask others for help.** If you know there is a student that has considerable skill when it comes to writing and you don't think they'll mind, ask them for help. All the advice and revision you can get will be invaluable!

## **CONCLUDING THOUGHTS:**

Although these tips are specifically geared toward writing transfer essays, they apply in different fields and are catered for a variety of circumstances. If you are applying for an internship, undergraduate summer program, scholarship, essay contest, or any other positions that require a personal statement, these tips are applicable and useful. These tips are versatile and can come in handy at different stages of your life as well.

Now that you've read through the tips that will help guarantee you write a successful essay, it's time to start writing. This can be the most difficult moment in the entire process, considering that there are so many ways to begin and so many things to say. Don't be afraid to brainstorm or outline what you think you might include in your essay. This helps you organize your thoughts and makes the process of elaboration simpler.

If you still find yourself stuck, you're welcome to reference the sample essays that have been provided in the following pages. They are all from students that have been accepted into the colleges / universities to which they applied.

## Examples of Students' Successful Transfer Essays

### EXAMPLE 1: PERSONAL STATEMENT

Solemnly, I stood before the double doors of the place I had only ever visited in my dreams. Self-consciously, I smoothed my skirt and straightened my jacket that was too hot for the Tallahassee summer. The massive courtroom doors opened before me with a quick clink and a solemn young woman ushered me in and directed me toward my table.

My partner and I sat on the side labeled "APPELLEE"; our opponents sat at the other side of the wooden podium, labeled "APPELLANT". As we rose for the seven judges, my brain instantly went into overdrive reviewing our case and going over the fact pattern, statutes, case law, and precedents I had researched for weeks. After that, everything fell into place much like a river that flows too quickly toward its destination. The opposing counsels were called to stand, my co-counsel spoke, and before I was really aware of the gravity of the circumstances, the challenge had begun. After eight eternal minutes of rapid-fire questioning and instant answers about my case, I finally took the seat beside my co-counsel, awaiting the decision of the judges.

"The Court has held, with a decision of 5 to 2, that we will affirm the ruling of the Appellate Court. Congratulations, appellees, you have won your first case before the Florida Supreme Court." The words didn't register until my partner pulled me into a massive hug, almost as stunned as I by the final decision. The moment was so exhilarating, so incredible. Even if we were simply students role-playing as attorneys and judges in the Florida State Summer for Undergraduates Law Program, even if the case was not real and there was nothing at stake but my ego and reputation as a pre-law student, I felt a satisfaction that I never experienced beforehand. Experiencing the intellectual challenges of the moment, as well as the expectations to perform well under pressure, I was able to take a glimpse into my future profession. I realized throughout the program that pushing myself out of my comfort zone, challenging my limits, and exceeding all expectations strictly set forth by myself and others, I will not give up until I succeed. I will not settle for that which is not challenging; I strive for greatness and keep success as a top priority. Transferring to another institution of higher education inspires me to draw the line of my own limitations a bit further. Now, more than ever, I feel that I have begun to reach my potential; I am ready to move on. The next level calls me forward; new experiences and my own search for knowledge beg me to continue my journey of education. I willingly take a step toward the challenge and accept it.

The pairing of passion and academic fortitude, along with a focus on attending to the needs of the public and the community, are all factors I consider when I envision myself in another institution. Now that I am about to graduate, I reflect upon my time at Miami Dade College and remain grateful for the opportunities it has given me, providing me with the essential factors to become a successful transfer student. Convinced that I can achieve all that I incessantly work for, it would be an honor for me to transfer to an institution in which I can identify with a student body that has a similar drive, motivation, and desire to serve the community, and has formidable professors. I hope to grow not only intellectually, but also personally during my time there, and explore all the opportunities available. With a perseverant attitude and the courage to take on the toughest tasks, I will feel privileged to attend an institution that furthers these ideas and fosters these principles.

### EXAMPLE 2: SUPPLEMENTAL ESSAY – (NARRATIVE)

On a dark and breezy night after a hurricane sped through town, a tall little girl sat on her great-aunt's porch in Santa Clara and stared at the stars she had never before seen. They're so bright, she thought in awe. They seemed so near, she might be able to reach out to the ashy vastness and grab one, maybe put it under her pillow to brighten her dreams. With eyes wide open, she listened to her momma tell stories of men with belts, and twin sisters, and brother bears, such fantastical worlds that made more sense than her own. A crooked smile adorned her chubby face as she sat on her momma's lap amidst the laziness of a late summer weeknight. Her warm, mud pie eyes seemed to be too big for her little face every time they opened with wonder or grew with curiosity. The light that would shine from within them was something to behold. The way she would perk up at the mention of an adventure or a possible journey was almost comical. She was such an expressive child it felt almost as if you were watching a miniaturized adult. Sometimes, she would place her awkwardly big hands on her little hips and furrow her dark eyebrows as she reprimanded her dog for chewing apart her favorite Reptar quilt.

A brave little thing she was, that charcoal-haired girl. She walked across the river before the others, making up a little trail on the rocks as she went so they weren't scared. She challenged the fastest runner in third grade to a race; even though she lost, all the girls in fifth grade suddenly wanted to become her best friend. She wasn't popular, but people knew her as the one who they could talk to. She wasn't wise or all-knowing, but she always had something to say. She was an odd child, if not strange. She was quite tranquil, she never really cried when she fell from her bicycle. Instead of playing house, she played librarian. Instead of drawing pink flowers and blue skies, she would write her momma letters.

Defining her was as difficult of a task as separating the different flavors of a melted Napolitano ice cream on a sticky Sunday afternoon. Yes, she was simple, but she had these moments where she would take the ordinary out of the world and make you forget there was something rather bland about everyday life. As that little girl grew older, she reminded herself of who she was, and promised never to forget. She vowed to remember how she grew up and reaffirm her belief in herself. She grew quickly, almost skipping through the teenage years like a child would through a hopscotch game. It happened so fast, it was almost impossible to distinguish at one point she was a little girl with a big dream, and when she turned into a woman with great hopes for her future.

### **EXAMPLE 3: SUPPLEMENTAL ESSAY – (EXPERIENTIAL)**

*Describe the life experiences, personal factors and notable challenges that have influenced you most as a student and a person. (500 words)*

When I was a child, my mother and I would sit on the small porch of my great aunt's quaint home in the Cuban countryside on cool autumn nights and stare at the stars in the vastness above us. Momma, they look so lonely in the big sky, I remember telling her once. They must be sad. She smiled, a memory I treasure because of its rarity. There are millions more we can't see, she assured me. Even if you can't see them, they are there. Sometimes they're just hard to see.

My mother and I have always been close, unsurprisingly, since she's the only family member I have. I have always lived alone with her, working as a team. I don't remember much of my childhood spent in Cuba, but I do remember, however, the struggles my mom faced trying to raise and educate me. Often, she would take me along with her on work trips all over the island, lacking someone that could take care of me; she enrolled me in the local pre-school as soon as I turned four, feeling I would be in good hands.

My memories of my early years are filled with my mother's face, her voice, her kisses and hugs, and her reprimands. In the early days of 1998, without a single suitcase in hand, my mother only carried a small purse with documents and refused to look back as we boarded a flight to the almost-mystical land of *Estados Unidos*. Ironically, it was extremely difficult for us the first couple of years.

My mother never gave up, though. She studied English at night, worked during the morning, maintained our household, and sat endless hours with me at the kitchen table with books surrounding us. For years she gathered hand-me-down work clothes from gracious co-workers and church friends, just so she could buy me the uniform I needed to wear. We slept on the same rickety bed, we didn't own a television set, and we cut out coupons for groceries together on the weekends; but none of that mattered to me. We had each other, we were healthy, and we were alive.

That was the mentality I grew up with; my mother always reminded me of the importance of the intangible. I never felt an attachment to material things, not only because we didn't have many, but because she always reminded me that they were transitory things. She instilled values of hard work, sacrifice, and maximum effort, and they have led me to become the person I am today. She led by example, and is the model of strength and character I will always admire. She is the reason for which I push forward, challenge myself, and strive for the best. I have always known that I need to go the extra ten miles in order to achieve the personal and academic goals I set for myself. I excel and succeed because I feel the calling to supersede expectations.

### **EXAMPLE 4: SUPPLEMENTAL ESSAY – (RISK)**

*Introduce yourself to Penn. Our aim is to better understand how your identity, talents, and background guide your day-to-day experiences. (150 words)*

I may not have a lightning-shaped scar on my forehead from surviving a deadly curse, but I have skinned knees and elbows from climbing too many trees and getting up after falling too many times. I don't fashion black thickly-rimmed circular spectacles and read incantations, but I clean the lenses of rectangular glasses on a t-shirt as I take a break on page 237 of *A Thousand Splendid Suns*. I may not be skilled enough to fly broomsticks, but I can integrate the distance from the ground to a point in the sky and express the findings with colors on a canvas. I might not have saved the Wizarding World of London, but I've done everything I can to impact the lives of those around me in Miami, Florida. I'm not Harry Potter, but I deserve a chance to prove that I can make a difference.

#### **EXAMPLE 5: SECONDARY APPLICATION ESSAY – (COMBINATION)**

*Please relate your interest in studying at Georgetown University to your future goals. How do these thoughts relate to your chosen course of study? (750 words)*

“What do you want to be when you grow up?”

In my kindergarten class, some wanted to become princesses, others dreamt of being cowboys, a few were determined to become astronauts, and the majority wanted to be wealthy. I, however, never knew how to answer that question; all I knew was that I wanted to grow up. I wanted to be a big girl someday, and when I was older I wanted to wake up every morning excited to go to work. Whenever I thought of hiding behind the three walls of a cubicle answering phone calls and putting clients on hold all day long, I cringed. I seldom pictured myself wearing a white coat, holding a clipboard and inspecting a patient on a sterilized hospital bed; it didn't seem to be my place either.

As I contemplated different options, I realized one of my greatest strengths was interacting with others. Resolving problems and finding innovative ways to approach issues seemed to be my greatest forte. It was then that I decided I wanted to dedicate my life to the service of others. It was never clear exactly who I wanted to help, or how I would be of assistance to them, yet I did not waver in my goal to change someone's life. I decided it did not have to be a change of great proportions; I would simply be content if I was able to make a small impact on an individual. I never expected to save the world, but I was sure that I would never be satisfied if I didn't at least try, on a smaller scale, to touch the lives of those around me.

Early in high school, I soon decided I wanted to become a social worker or a grade school teacher. As I approached the end of my junior year, I realized my true passion was somewhere else: the law. Becoming an attorney would let me serve the general public in every area of their lives. I would have a wide range of fields to choose from and I would be able to help a diverse group of individuals. Growing up in Miami, Florida and attending a school in a less-than-privileged neighborhood, I realized how important the issue of immigration is and how it impacts everyone, not just around the community but nationally and globally. It was a field I started researching and became interested in as well as criminal justice, and labor and employment law. What better place than Washington, D.C. to pursue a career in these areas and impact the lives of individuals in every part of the country?

Located at the dynamic epicenter of political tempests and intense policy-making, it is only natural that I am interested in attending Georgetown University to pursue my undergraduate and graduate studies. Knowing that I will be entering the legal field as a professional, having the opportunity to study in the nation's capital will be an incomparable experience. It will be even more interesting yet to study in a university that is filled with students equally as passionate and active in the social and political scene as I am. At Georgetown, I will be challenged as a student—intellectually—and as a global citizen—personally. I hope to take the lessons I learn in the classroom and apply them on a grander scale to empower the community and enhance city.

In light of the aforementioned, I have decided to focus my undergraduate studies on English Literature and Psychology. I plan to obtain a degree in both disciplines, as they will be assets in the legal field and will help me develop strategies to make positive civic changes. I chose to study English Literature primarily because it allows me to develop analytical skills and furthers my capacity to think critically and dissect written works. I can explore new opportunities to evaluate the human condition through analyzing literature and the most significant and

impacting works of mankind's history. I will also be able to discover the craft and art of using language as a means of expressing ideas and furthering communications. Similarly, studying Psychology will unveil an entirely foreign perspective that will add to my understanding of the workings of the mind. With the appropriate knowledge and intellectual foundation, I will be adept in analyzing behavior and will be able to arrive to conclusions by breaking down the factors that influence an individual to act in a certain manner.

### **EXAMPLE 6: SUPPLEMENTAL ESSAY – (INTERACTION)**

*What issue of local, national, or international significance concerns you? Why? (750 words)*

Knowledge is the most precious possession an individual has. After we have aged and experienced what we must in the journey of life, the only things we will have left to hold on to are our knowledge and our memories. My mother sometimes reminds me, "They can take your job, they can take your house, they can take your car, but they can never take what you know." I have never understood who "they" are, but I agree with her in that material possessions are variable; they can be lost as quickly as they are earned. Yet, knowledge is different; it is like a child's favorite toy: guarded with care, held onto with pride, and shared with everyone.

We come to know information, fun facts, and interesting trivia from different sources, building a foundation like a colorful mosaic. We learn from making mistakes, asking questions, looking to others, and going to school. Unfortunately, not everyone gets the opportunity to gain knowledge through formal education. From an early start in America, we are encouraged to learn and explore the magical world of the library, get lost in the ancient lands of the museum, and travel the universe through documentaries of The History Channel. However, this is not common in many countries around the world. In Afghanistan, girls are discouraged from learning what boys learn in school, and are often victimized when they seek education. I remember reading an article on the Washington Post about the suffering of a group of girls in Kandahar. They were attacked and suffered severe burns when they were ambushed on the way to school by men who threw acid at their faces. I was taken aback, unable to understand the reason for such cruelty and obvious persecution of innocents simply exercising their right to become educated.

It is a shame that adolescents in Nicaragua are forced to stop attending school because their economic situations are so terrible that they drop out of middle school to start working so they are able to bring food home. There shouldn't be a need for a teenager in Ghana to trade books for an anvil and slave away long hours in hazardous conditions when they should be sitting in a classroom attentive to a lesson. From a very young age, I have learned to appreciate the importance of education and have been privileged to grow in an environment that fosters creativity and intellectual curiosity. The lessons I have learned and the knowledge I have gained have allowed me to become an active global citizen, cognizant of the needs of others and the problems around me that must be addressed. Without the proper foundation, I would not be where I am today, and I would not have the same aspirations. I feel every child, teenager, and young adult deserves to dream of doing great things, so the issue of inadequate education is therefore something that I feel strongly about. It is impossible for us to shape successful future leaders of the world if we do not give them the opportunity to become educated individuals.

As the only child of a single immigrant mother, it was always clear to me that if I wanted to succeed, I would need to become as educated as I could and grab on to all the knowledge that came my way. Although it was difficult to adjust when I first arrived to the country, I was confident that soon I would understand what all the other boys and girls were laughing about during recess. Thanks to long hours at the dining table sitting next to my mother while I cringed at funny-looking vocabulary words, I was able to break the language barrier and soon started climbing to the top of my first grade class.

The satisfaction of being a good student and learning new things every day is something so powerful that it would be unfair to take it away from others. Nothing compares to the "aha!" moments, or the wonder a student feels when they discover something new, making a connection to another source of knowledge they have acquired. It is a beautiful step in the development of their personalities, their minds, and their interests. A child that is exposed to reading at an early age is more likely to become interested in a wide variety of topics. A young adult that is engaged in academics is less likely to leave school because of involvement with drugs, alcohol, and violence, and will probably continue their studies in superior levels. Education empowers individuals; it creates a conscientious society, a more cooperative world.

## EXAMPLE 7: SUPPLEMENTAL ESSAY

*Consider the world within. Taste in music, food and clothing can make a statement while politics, sports, religion and ethnicity are often defining attributes. Are you a vegetarian? A poet? Do you prefer YouTube or test tubes, Mac or PC? Are you the drummer in an all-girl rock band? Do you tinker? (200-250 words)*

When I ask myself what these questions mean to me and how its interpretations define various pieces of my existential experience and understanding, I find myself feeling like a Picabia painting – indistinct, distorted, and radiant –having extensions of different cultures and aesthetic tastes. And who am I but a mental, spiritual, and emotional body of cultural experiences that have molded me? For I am a wild Cuban coffee drinking voice with the spirit of a native woman; a mind of both and neither of my parents (they have but given me the left section of my brain in times of rationality, leaving the right side an area developed simultaneously from my artistic impetus and my brothers' talent), a heart of my father: impenetrable when need be but kind in most cases; an unpredictable, unrestrained, uninhibited soul with an unquenched thirst for curiosity; an appetite of an Indonesian man with a taste for Tinutuan (rice porridge with vegetables); a blended style of 70's fashion and grunge; a sucker for Shostakovich's Piano Concerto No.2 Andante; a lover of primitive art; a firm believer in the Hindu model of reincarnation; an admirer of Hugo, Cummings, Neruda, Woolf, Poe, Pound, Yeats, and Wilde; a left-winged advocate of civil rights and autonomy; an opponent of aloofness and dispassion.

I am a hybridization of cultures I expose myself to and wish to experience. I am yesterday, today, and tomorrow –soon to shift shapes whenever I feel I've outgrown the previous one. And in my family's conservative eyes, I am both a sub and a counterculture.

## EXAMPLE 8: SUPPLEMENTAL ESSAY

*If you could have lunch with any historical figure, who would it be and why?*

Throughout history, there have been many prominent historical figures that have changed the world, redefined entire cultures, and are often regarded to as the movers and shakers of society. Looking back into history and its relevance in my life, I found only one person stuck out like a sore thumb. As an opera major, I have always had an eclectic taste in music; however, the one artist who had a profound impact on my life and musical likings is none other than John Lennon.

I will never forget as a young girl my father used to play his dusty old records for my siblings and I while he would kick up his heels and talk about “the good old days”. While I must admit his musical tastes were not exactly my cup of tea, there was one record in particular which I will never forget. My dad placed a quite cheery looking record filled with bright colors on the coffee table and it had a rather odd title “Sergeant Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band” by the Beatles. From the first time I heard the psychedelic, outer worldly, dare I say even outlandish, songs on this album I was desperately in love.

At the ripe age of thirteen, I had no idea how much of an impact this man would have on my life, my musical likings, and my perception of others around me. There was something special about his music and the way it evoked this sense of wanting to better understand the world around me and everything it has to offer. I slowly but surely became very enamored with his writing style, his music, his cultural choices and political activism.

If I were to have my deepest fantasy of meeting John Lennon for lunch come true, I would be one very excited lady. I wouldn't know where to begin with the line of questioning. I would love to ask him where he got his inspiration for my personal favorite song “Across The Universe”, why he chose to become a yogi, what drove him to become the best writer of his era, how and why did he choose to experiment with various different instruments in a vast array of songs, etc. I would like to be the kind of person John Lennon was; fearless, bold, creative, positive and empowering. His music helped incite a “Revolution”, inspired many others to emulate his talents, and ultimately he paved the way for all the political activists to take a stand and peacefully fight for what they believe in.

A man with a kind, gentle, soothing, nostalgic voice and a brilliant mind to match would be one who I would absolutely be thrilled to spend a casual lunch with. As our lunch date would come to a close, I would tell John as

he once told me “I hope someday I can join you, so the world can be as one”. John Lennon is, and always will be my idol, my inspiration and the one man whose music keeps me grounded.

### **EXAMPLE 9: SUPPLEMENTAL ESSAY**

*What does diversity mean to you? What can you bring to University X in terms of diversity?*

As I see it, diversity is the organic method by which nature brings about change and development. Diversity is the building block of ideas, the catalyst for evolution; it opens up a whole world of opportunities and perspectives that are vital for society and individual advancement. It is a link between individuals which provides the unity and proximity that we, as human beings, seek. Different cultures are different means by which to see the same issues, different customs, goals, priorities, and different ways to solve a problem. Diversity not only allows people and situations to flourish, but it also fuels novelty and curiosity – the stuff that makes (and keeps) life interesting.

A university, or college, is a cradle of diversity – it is where you get the first inkling of what is really out there in terms of people and cultures; it is where it all truly starts. That is one of the main reasons why I am attracted to a college education; I want to be part of a thriving community where I can realize my full potential and use it to help other members of the community reach theirs. Each culture is a voice of experience and I want to lend my voice to this multicultural community of Agnes Scott to empower it, enrich it, and improve it.

I want to bring my ideas and my life experiences as a Colombian woman with a burning desire to better this world not only environmentally, but also socially and intellectually. I was raised to help in every way and capacity I can, and that has always stayed with me. I am open to all kinds of ideas, I am willing to embrace new experiences and make the best of them. I want to offer my talents and motivation, especially to this school, because its special focus on women’s education hits close to home like no other school does.

My elementary education (and a small part of my secondary education) took place at an all-girls Catholic school in my native country of Colombia. I would have liked to continue my education that way, but finances and my family’s situation as newly arrived political asylees prevented that. Now that I have the opportunity to pursue this type of education again, I want to take advantage of it and work hard for it. The person I am is largely a result of the type of education I received during those seven years of my life and I would not trade them for anything in this world – at San Juan Bosco, the school I went to for the majority of my life, I learned to speak English, I learned science, ethics, to think independently and to move forward as a woman and a member of society; it is where I learned to be compassionate and considerate of other people. The memories of what I learned there are some of my most cherished memories. I would like to experience this type of education again and establish new, lasting bonds in this new stage of life.

The beginning is the most vital part of anything and everything in this world; both the beginning of my life as a student and the beginning of my life as an adult young woman are critical periods of my life, and just as I was embraced and thoroughly educated by my childhood catholic school, I want to be embraced and educated by Agnes Scott. In turn, I would offer Agnes Scott everything valuable and wholesome I was taught, and the very best of me in exchange for the world that Agnes Scott can offer me.

### **EXAMPLE 10: SUPPLEMENTAL ESSAY**

*If you have had paid work experience what skills and/or knowledge did you gain?*

Since I was little, I had always been interested in design. One day I thought to myself, “what could be more fun than engaging in the world of fashion?” I started working with the retail industry five years ago with a Spanish company name ZARA.USA in the men’s department. I left the company a year and a half ago to get more experience from different retail environments. Today, I am working at a designer store Lilly Pulitzer, where the inspiration comes from Palm Beach’s architecture and lifestyle.

Working at Zara and Lilly has been an incredible learning experience. Every day that I am there, I learn something new either from the fashion industry or from the actual customers. At ZARA, I learned about fitting the right clothes for different types of men, including size and style.

I also learned how to make different outfits using a variety of colors without forgetting what fashion trends were in style. Besides learning about the fashion aspect, I developed customer service skills. Listening to the clients' likes or dislikes is very important because I would know what approach to take and I could get their attention with the first garment I would show them. In addition, I was able to learn how to talk with customers in a way that they would feel comfortable and would want to come back to shop more.

Besides being a sales associate, I was also a visual coordinator and a cashier. I had the responsibility of using the pictures of the displays sent from Spain to organize the merchandise that we had received for a specific collection. Doing that, I would play with colors, styles, order and space.

Furthermore, due to the experience I had obtained I was able to train several new employees in the positions of sales and cashier. Doing this helped me improve my leadership and communication skills and it let my store managers know that I was an asset to their company.

### **EXAMPLE 11: SUPPLEMENTAL ESSAY**

*What is your intended major? Discuss how your interest in the subject developed and describe any experience you have had in the field — such as volunteer work, internships and employment, participation in student organizations and activities — and what you have gained from your involvement.*

Curiously enough, I arrived at my decision to major in psychology through writing -first about myself, then about others. This interest in the writing process as a sort of therapy began early in my ninth grade year and has continued until today. Ever since I discovered the power of a pen on paper when it was writing words, my personal views on the world and others have changed dramatically, and just as my writing continues to evolve with years of practice, so do my beliefs and my desire to pursue the field of psychology further. Granted, the leap from writing to wanting to become a psychologist is not the most clear, but there is a method to the madness, so to speak. My love for writing and exploring what lies in the human heart has led me to want to pursue psychology as my career, and the work I have done at the Miami Dade College's Writing Center has opened up my eyes to facets of human beings that I am not normally exposed to. I am dealing with students' innermost thoughts and conflicts on a daily basis and to be reduced to merely observing and pointing students in the right direction resembles a psychologist's job more than I would have ever imagined.

Before I began working at the Writing Center on campus at Miami Dade College, I was more or less devoted to writing for myself and occasionally reading over someone else's writing to help them out a little; writing for myself was therapeutic but there was no interaction with others unless I shared my writing. I was able to go further with written words than I dared with mere mental introspection; as much as the discipline focuses on the individual, the society with whom this individual interacts is just as important. Before I embarked on further studies of psychology, I knew I was going to have to branch out and work more closely with others in more ways than just minimal interactions.

Now that my work consists of reading and helping students correct their mistakes, I get to interact with people and see their thought processes at work in a roundabout way - some are clear-cut and only require minimal guidance, whereas others need to start from scratch and sort through their own convoluted ideas until they find the answers to their flaming questions. Inadvertently, I play the part of psychologist trying to find the meaning in their writing, pointing out where their deep-seated issues with grammar or form lie -- and occasionally, I go through the anguish and joy of a particularly tough tutoring session when my 'patient' finally breaks through the confusion of the assignment and is finally able to figure out how to go about a topic, or - much more problematic - develop a decent thesis statement after much frustration. The more I think about it, the more the writing center starts to resemble a psychologist's practice - people and go, making appointments or simply walking in clutching their papers as if their lives depended on it - and they just might, or at the very least their grades do.

Even though I have not had work or volunteering experience in an area directly related to psychology, like a mental hospital or an institution of the kind, working at the writing center has given me a new perspective on

how to interact with other people, how best to reach them, and what methods to use in order to help them get the most out of their visit. In truth, my job, and one that I love, does not differ much from the goals of a therapist; granted, I would love to participate in projects directly related to my major, but as far as a sample of what I would have to deal with on a daily basis, the writing center has proved useful. The more I work there, the more I love it and the larger my desire grows to coach others through more than just essays.

#### **EXAMPLE 12: SUPPLEMENTAL ESSAY**

*What are the core skills and knowledge you hope to acquire by completing a degree in this major and how do you plan to apply these when you graduate?*

Core skills are essential in order to obtain a degree. Upon completing my degree in Journalism, I not only plan to have the core skills of fairness, accuracy, honesty, humility and diversity, but I also plan on living the lifestyle of a journalist. With fairness and accuracy, I will have the mind-set to exclude subjective reasoning and only use an objective paradigm. Through honesty and humility justice will be heard and the truth will be uncovered. Diversity will bring me the satisfaction to promote all occurrences with every multicultural group and staying true to my roots. The capability needed to seek the truth is acquired through passion, dedication and motivation. Upon graduation I seek to be employed by a communications' network that prefers to publish the truth rather than seek glory. The goal of journalism is to express reality as factual as possible and enjoyable for the reader. In order to obtain that goal, journalism becomes a way of life. To some, the journalism road is simply a career path but to me it is the way home.

#### **EXAMPLE 13: SUPPLEMENTAL ESSAY**

*Please tell us more about your interest in transferring. Why does Brown appeal to you as a college option? Who or what has influenced your decision to apply?*

Braudilio Camaraza, my fourth grade teacher in Cuba, once told my mother that I was a pupil with “*muchas sorpresas*” or many surprises. He meant that I loved numerous activities and that I wasn't the type of student that only enjoyed one subject. I showed passion towards history, love for literature, curiosity in geography, and excitement for baseball. When I look back at my childhood, I see myself playing soccer and also reading the story “Platero the donkey and I;” Mr. Camaraza was right! Recently, when I was researching about universities, I discovered Brown and instantly knew that I could add value to it with my wide-ranging interests.

Brown University is the perfect place where to deepen my passion for the cosmos. I'd love to be part of the Brown Space Engineering team and make people excited about space. Also, to unwind from classes, it would be exciting to participate in the Annual Juried Student Art Exhibition and share the drawings I've enjoyed creating since childhood.

Additionally, Brown has the resources to solidify my affinity for engineering. Through independent study, I hope to work with Jennifer A. Franck on the research of aeronautics; this is an experience that I will take with me as I go deeper in a field of spacecraft design.

At Brown, I will certainly get closer to fulfilling a promise that I once made to my father: that I would make the exploration of the stars in the sky possible—this attracts me to your institution a lot. However, what attracts me to Brown the most is the opportunity to pursue my diverse interests. It is a place where I can walk out of a thermodynamics class, and then attend a lesson of Taekwondo, essentially, the university where I can be the student of “*muchas sorpresas*.”