

# **TIPS for APPLICANTS**

## **Tips for Creating Strong Personal Statement**

### **Carol E. Macpherson Memorial Scholarship**

Note: *We want you to succeed.* After you have completed a draft of your application, gather your questions and feel free to email or call us to help you.

#### **Personal Statements**

##### **1. Creating a strong Personal Statement**

- a. Your life purpose and goals
  - i. What is your major and why did you choose it?
  - ii. What makes you passionate about this choice?
  - iii. What do you intend to do once you graduate? (Go to work? Grad School? Other?)
  
- b. Include what makes you unique
  - Speak to how you would stand out as an awardee Ex: *Nothing will stop me from meeting my goals, so I know I will one day be an alum who . . .*
  - Why you would be a GREAT FIT for this particular scholarship? Mention how you fit the criteria, if not included in a prior section. Might include if you have something in common with the person the scholarship was named for or is honoring.
- c. Outline struggles and obstacles you have overcome (while honoring your right to privacy and comfort with self-disclosure when sharing details).
- d. Need
  - i. Things not reflected in financial aid alone: inter-generational poverty, additional expenses that are not reflected in your financial aid or income (child-care, health and medical costs, recent loss of income or other hardship)
- e. Include your timeline and other academic details
  - i. What year are you in? When do you plan on graduating?
  - ii. What is your GPA? (Do not apply if you do not meet required GPA.) If there are issues with your GPA explain why it is lower than it should be. Ex: *I started college 10 years ago and was just not ready, I got all Fs my first term, dropped out and have been working ever since. I have gotten nothing by As and Bs since I re-entered but my overall GPA is still calculated with those old grades.*

##### **2. Polish it!**

- a. Go back and read the criteria/questions in the application materials. Did you answer all their questions?
- b. Use spellcheck - but don't rely on it completely.
- c. Read your statement out loud to yourself when completed. Does it sound clear to your ear? Does it flow?

**d. Find at least two proof readers**

- i. Chose academic staff as proof readers and editors, if possible.
- ii. Possible proofreaders include:
  - 1. Career Center staff
  - 2. Writing Center staff
  - 3. Academic advisor
  - 4. Instructor/TA
  - 5. If English is your second language, there may be an office on your campus that will help by proofreading.
  - 6. Your references? (only if you know them well as it is a lot to ask to do both)
  - 7. Staff from a campus program you are engaged with
  - 8. English major friend (but only if you have seen their writing or know they have gotten As in English)
  - 9. Some librarians might be willing to help.
  - 10. A neighbor or friend who is a teacher or works in Human Resources

**3. Upload Personal Statement**

Your Personal Statement should be submitted as a PDF or Word document (PDF recommended). \*IMPORTANT: Save the file name as: "YourLastName.YourFirstName.PersonalStatement" before uploading using the link on the Application Page.

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**SAMPLE Personal Statement**  
**(This is just one sample. Please use your own style to tell the Selection Committee, in a professional manner of course, your story.)**

**Carol E. Macpherson Memorial Scholarship**  
**by YOUR NAME**  
**DATE**

Dear Scholarship Selection Committee,

After my graduation in May, I will be the first person in my family to complete a Bachelor's Degree. Aside from being an enormous personal accomplishment, completing my degree has made me proud to represent my family as a whole and I am eager to continue my education through the completion of a Master's Degree. The Carol E. Macpherson Memorial Scholarship would aid immensely in making that pursuit a possibility.

**Educational and Professional Goals**

Like most students pursuing a Master's Degree in Speech-Language-Pathology, I hope

to make a positive impact on my clients and improve their overall quality of life by ensuring that their treatment attends to their unique needs. My passion lies in giving voices to those individuals who struggle in the physical sense as well as those who struggle in a social sense. I dream of using the skills I acquire in the classroom to not only have an impact in my own community, but on an international scale as well. I want to help create a world where speech and language health is no longer overshadowed by financial, social, or medical hardships. Receiving the Carol E. Macpherson Memorial Scholarship will assist me in achieving these goals.

### **Responsibilities and Characteristics**

My overwhelming desire to further my knowledge in my field and to make an impact along with my empathetic personality are characteristics that I think will help me be effective in my career. By researching solutions to issues present in my field, I aspire to be a positive change agent for individuals and in my community throughout my life. I also strive to serve as a leader on campus - in my classrooms, at work, and through involvement in student and professional organizations. Currently, I am an officer in two student organizations in my field, X and Y. I am proud of the organizational skills that allow me to work part-time in the field while going to school full-time and maintaining a 3.8 GPA.

### **Relevant Experience**

I have had valuable experience in the community that has helped to prepare me for my graduate education and future career. As a part of the National Student Speech Language and Hearing Association I have volunteered with childcare and therapeutic organizations throughout my undergraduate career. Dr. Jana, from the School of Public Health, has asked me to be a co-author on a research paper on speech and language health in the Latinx community and we are just beginning to collect the data for this important project. I also work as a Student Worker in the Eyes, Nose, and Throat Clinic with the University of Minnesota Physicians office. These experiences challenge me to broaden my skill set both academically and professionally.

### **Financial Need and Additional Information**

As a graduate student balancing classes and the required unpaid clinical placements, the Carol E. Macpherson Memorial Scholarship will provide critical assistance in making my educational and professional dreams a reality. As a recipient of this Scholarship, I will work to represent Minnesota well as I expand and enhance my knowledge of the field. I will always advocate for those I work with and people with similar needs, working to ensure that they and their communities are equipped and supported throughout their healthcare process.

(Optional conclusion paragraph here.)

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

*your signature here*

NAME

address

Email

phone