

**COUNSELOR
CONFERENCE**

Using the Application to Paint a Picture HS Applicants

UC Counselor Conference
September 2015

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“Strangers are reading my application and judging me. They don’t know me, how can they possibly know me?”



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Agenda

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Comprehensive Review

9 sections of the UC Application

Where students can spotlight their accomplishments

Show vs Tell – painting a picture, setting the context

Q&A

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Comprehensive Review

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Comprehensive Review

Campuses Look For

- Strong grades, test scores & course preparation
- A robust educational experience

Assess Students Within Context

- Educational environment
- Available resources and opportunities

The Full Application

- Not just the personal statement
- Not just grades and test scores

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9 Sections of the UC Application

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9 Sections of the UC Application



Mandatory vs Optional

Questions students can skip can often paint the biggest picture for admissions professionals

Knowing vs Guessing

What does UC want to know?

What if I don't know the answer?

9 Sections of the UC Application

Optional Questions:

Checking the box or leaving it blank?

Foster Care

- ☒ Check if you have ever been in foster care (e.g., foster home, group home or placed with a relative by the court).

Educational Opportunity Program

- ☐ Check if you want to apply for the Educational Opportunity Program (EOP).

If you apply to EOP, you will need to report your parents' level of education, family size and income later in the application.

About You

Language

Does the student speak a second language at home?
Is the student translating for their parents/family?

Family Income

Fee Waiver

Parent Information

Single parent house hold?
Mom/Dad/Guardian's employment?

Parent Information

[Edit](#)

	Current Job Category	Current Job Title	Yrs	Previous Job Category	Previous Job Title	Yrs	Highest Level of Education
Parent 1	Deceased						No High School
Parent 2	Other	Retired	5	Service	Housekeeper	35	No High School

Academic History

Additional Comments Logistics

One of two additional comments boxes. In the **ACADEMIC HISTORY** section the limit is 550 characters

In the **PERSONAL STATEMENT** section the limit is 550 words

Additional Comments should:

- Explain bad grades, grade changes, repeating a course

- Define Magnets, Academies, Special Programs which require an application or audition

- Elaborate on the school resources (Ex. Removal of AP curriculum)

- Describe any structural changes (Ex. Trimester to Semester)

- Highlight grade trends (Ex. C's to A's over a period of time)

Academic History

Academic – setting the context of the school, academic program.

The Engineering Academy is limited to 25 students/grade level. I was selected out of 170 applicants. We are required to complete Calculus BC by senior yr so I took 2 math classes every year. Our engineering lab work happens zero period (7-7:50 a.m.) Monday - Thursday. We are also required to sit in on seminars Wednesday after school (4-6 p.m.).

At the beginning of my sophomore year, I was in a serious car accident and spent an extended time in the hospital and in physical therapy. For two months, my school district provided in-home teachers for me. I was able to maintain progress in all subjects except math: I fell behind in Trigonometry and earned a "C" in my first semester, the first time ever! Over the holiday break in December, I started studying math independently through Kahn Academy's free online program. I was able to catch up, and I received an "A" at the end of the year.

Non-Academic – changes/life circumstances that affected a students academics

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**Where students can
spotlights their
accomplishments**

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Activities and Awards

Time Frame

Four years of high school
Does not have to be sponsored by the school!

Commitment

Local affiliation (member)
State, National, or International
Leadership

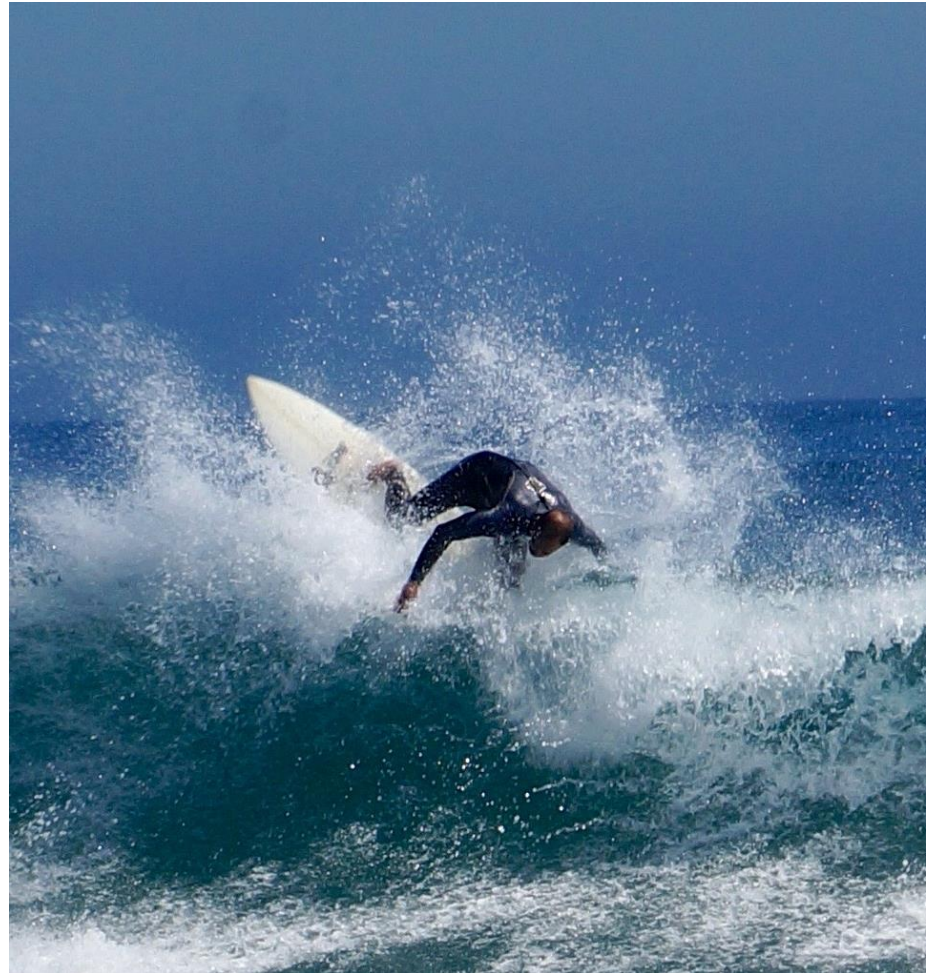
Inside This Section

> Introduction

- > 1. Coursework Other Than A-G
- > 2. Educational Prep Programs
- > 3. Community Service
- > 4. Work Experience
- > 5. Awards & Honors
- > 6. Extracurricular Activities
- > 7. Review Activities & Awards

“It’s just a hobby, should I add it?”

“It’s not academic in nature so UC won’t care, right?”



Activities and Awards

Descriptions Matter

Clarity

Context

Selectivity



Activities and Awards

Add an Award/Honor

What was the award/honor name?

Soaring Eagle

What was the type of award/honor?

Academic

When was it received?

Month

Year (yyyy)

May

2015

Briefly describe the award/honor.

(Entries over 160 characters will be truncated. The following characters count as
Character Count: 57 Characters Remaining: 103

Given to one student every year for academic performance.

ADD

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Add an Award/Honor

What was the award/honor name?

Soaring Eagle

What was the type of award/honor?

Academic

When was it received?

Month

Year (yyyy)

May

2015

Briefly describe the award/honor.

(Entries over 160 characters will be truncated. The following characters count as
Character Count: 155 Characters Remaining: 5

Academic excellence award (3.8+ GPA), only student selected from 450 in my graduating class. Awarded by the school district. Comes with a \$100 scholarship.

ADD

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Activities and Awards

Add an Activity

What was the activity name?

Volleyball (HS & Club)

During which high school years were you involved?

☒ 9th ☒ 10th ☒ 11th ☒ 12th ☐ After 12th

How much time did you devote to the activity?

Hours per Week

Weeks per Year

30

45

Briefly describe the activity.

(Entries over 160 characters will be truncated. The following characters count as
Character Count: 151 Characters Remaining: 9

10 yrs. playing club, Diamond league, national traveling team. Selected for Jr Olympic Team 2015.
HS: 3 yrs varsity, captain 2 yrs. 2014, 2015 won CIF.

ADD

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Description not definition

Students need to capture their accomplishments in each activity.

When – before HS?

Where – local, state, national

Abbreviations are allowed

Full sentences are not required.
They should make sense to someone over 40

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Show vs Tell

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“I was told to stand out, be unique, make the reader laugh, answer the question, show you who I am. You want that in 1,000 words? Not possible!”



UC Personal Statement

Instructions

Answer 2 mandatory prompts in a combined 1,000 words

Essay vs Personal Statement

It's not an essay!

This is the students interview with UC

It's never read alone



UC Personal Statement

Showing vs Telling

In the moment vs knowing what happened to the student

For Your Information ...

Responses are not “graded”

Grammar/spelling mistakes will not hurt a students admission

Sob stories do not guarantee admission

“I” and “my” statements are encouraged

One response is read all UC campuses the student applies to

Students don't have to entertain us

UC Personal Statement

I was born to run. People say that talented runners are developed by intense training, and practice. I beg to differ. My story begins well before I started distance running, specifically during youth sports in middle school. I played every sport under the sun, including: football, baseball, soccer, basketball and even La Crosse. I love competition, I compete in everything that I do, sometimes even against myself. Speed was my weapon and everything that I enjoyed playing required it.

When starting high school, it was my plan to play sports year round. XX High School was in for a new generation of runner and athlete. By the first week of school it was already too late to sign up for football. Practice had commenced over summer and the coach already filled roster spots. Although disappointed, I decided to join cross-country and start conditioning for basketball season. I hated running, but had to invest the time knowing basketball would be almost impossible to make the team. After training 40-50 miles a week it was time to test my legs at the first competition. Fifteen high schools were there with 5-7 runners per team, the competition was complete chaos. It was finally my turn to line up and the pistol fired-I'm off to the races. It felt very natural staying up front and couldn't believe I was leading the pack. Eighteen minutes later I took 6th place and medaled for the first time in high school. My coach came up to me and said "you are a natural runner XX, keep up the good work." Thus, began my running career.

Cross-country and track are not part-time sports. I am passionate about running and train harder during the off-season than regular. I can still hear the alarm sounding at 5am on a cold, winter morning. Slowly creeping out of bed and putting on my Saucony shoes, Nike sweat pants and sweatshirt. I make my way downstairs in the dark, trying not to step on the dogs, and quietly exit the front door. I start my first mile, second, third, striving for that 6:20 pace. My knees begin to loosen up, the fog in my head starts to lift and suddenly, a small adrenaline rush, what a beautiful day. Approaching six miles and really feeling good, I'm so glad I made the decision to roll out of bed this morning.

Although I give my heart and soul to distance running, it does not define me. It is the end result of a long journey consisting of relentless and disciplined training. These small steps towards a final goal are what define me-the sacrifice, pain and fight to the finish. I love competition and was born to be a runner. This passion will continue with me through my college career and as a professional.

UC Personal Statement

I have been running for 4 years. I use to hate running, but I knew it would be good preparation for sports I hoped to play in high school. I ran on my own 3 days a week. I took it upon myself to organize Saturday morning runs with teammates. I trained 40-50 miles a week! My leadership was acknowledged last year as I was voted team captain. As captain I am responsible for scheduling practice work outs (coordinating 40 teammates in the work-out room and track field), I communicate with our team mom to coordinate travel to meets.

In my first race it felt very natural staying up front, leading the pack. I took 6th place at my first race. In fact at every race since I have placed in the top 5 out of the 30-50 runners in my field. I rank 4th in our school district and 10th in the state. Cross-country and track are not part-time sports. I am passionate about running and train harder during the off-season than regular. 5am mornings Monday – Saturday show my dedication to the sport.

Running is more than a way to stay healthy and be part of a team. It has allowed me to find my career goal of starting an event planning business. Last year I worked with the high school and coaching staff to fund raise for new team uniforms. Most of my teammates could not afford the \$120 uniform cost. I organized two summer programs: a car wash and a community father/daughter dance. The car wash meant finding a venue, arranged students into shifts, finding a sponsor to donate supplies, and then I worked with a local gas station to use their facilities. We raised over \$1000 dollars in one day! The largest sport team fund raiser our school has ever had.

UC Personal Statement

Staying Focused

General advice on writing a personal statement.

Avoid

- Acronyms
- Quotes/Dialogue
- Creative Writing
- Story telling/scene setting
- Repetition
- Asking question
- Inappropriate use of humor



Resources

UC Comprehensive Review

<http://admission.universityofcalifornia.edu/counselors/freshman/comprehensive-review/index.html>

UCOP Personal Statement Instructions

<http://admission.universityofcalifornia.edu/how-to-apply/personal-statement/index.html>

UCOP Presentations, Guides, Handouts

<http://admission.universityofcalifornia.edu/counselors/downloadable-guides/index.html>

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Questions?

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