HOW TO MAKE YOUR PERSONAL STATEMENT STAND OUT

• Create an interesting first paragraph and summarize well
• Choose a theme, not the “hit or miss” approach
• Avoid gimmicks, such as poetry, recipes, etc.
• Personalize your essay by not just relating what you did but why you did it or what impact the experience had on you
• Explain how you have broadened your horizons
• Discuss your accomplishments in terms of the obstacles you overcame
• Tell the committee what you want them to know about you that is not necessarily reflected on your academic record or in the rest of your application
• Be creative, but genuine and reflect your own values and priorities
• Individualize your essay to each law school by giving specific reasons for applying to that school (not just pasting the name of the particular school in the last sentence of the essay)
• Emphasize the demanding, intellectually challenging courses you took, regardless of their obvious relation to the law (law school professors prefer to teach you the law; law-related courses or a law major are not very noteworthy)
• Do not emphasize sports unless that is how you got into college and you have a good academic record, and/or you have learned something about yourself through your involvement with athletics
• Always explain (but do not make excuses for) discrepancies in your academic or personal record
• Follow directions precisely (be cognizant of word or page limits, specific questions asked, etc. for each individual school)
• Keep it brief and succinct; two pages is usually preferred (unless directions say otherwise)
• Proofread again and again and again
• MAKE THE COMMITTEE WANT TO READ THE WHOLE ESSAY