

## Week 9 Seminar Workshop - Academic Statement Workshop III

A brief reminder of our work so far:

- In week 4, we considered the idea of being liberally educated on a very large scale, engaging with Cronon's Only Connect and Evergreen's Five Foci and Expectations. This offered us the opportunity to take up some articulations of what it might mean and how it might look to be "educated" and gave us a chance to make some critical judgments for ourselves.
- In week 6, we read some excerpts from McGrayne's Nobel Prize Women in Science. This connected with our broad program goal of working to explore how issues of power, identity, privilege, and equity intersect with the teaching, learning, and practice of math and science. These excerpts also gave us a chance to see how the work, struggles, and triumphs of very well educated mathematicians and scientists were described.
- In week 6, we also spent time with students in the upper division physical chemistry program Atoms, Molecules, and Reactions, as well as meeting Evergreen alum and Cornell PhD candidate Jennie Russ Kunitake.
- In week 8, we devoted significant time to academic planning and working on Academic Statements in the form of the "Looking Back", "Looking Around", and "Looking Ahead" exercises.

Today's activities continue your work on your Academic Statement, both for the Academic Statement itself but also beginning to work on your Self-Evaluation. As noted in the Syllabus & Covenant, both a Self-Evaluation and an Academic Statement are required for Matter & Motion. Additionally, many of you are required to post an updated version of your Academic Statement by spring quarter in order to register for classes for next fall (the window to post updated Academic Statements opened in week 7).

### **Activity I: (20 minutes) Academic Statement**

1. Form a group of 3. Try to work with at least 1 person you haven't worked much with so far.
2. Read the following bullet points out loud in your group, taking turns.
  - "The Academic Statement is a narrative introduction to our overall transcript. We write about where we've been and where we're going at Evergreen, describing our undergraduate studies as a whole. Reflective writing is a great way to understand what we've learned and to discover what we want to learn." (modified from <http://evergreen.edu/academicstatement/>)
  - One primary goal of our Academic Statement is to make sense of our academic trajectory. This might involve framing our past work (highlighting certain elements, minimizing others) to impose sense of (or reveal the sense of) that work. For most of us, it should also involve making thoughtful and informed choices about what makes sense to do next, and how best to prepare for that.
  - We likely have a great deal of raw material or even previous drafts to draw upon: past Academic Statements, an Orientation Essay, past Self-Evaluations, scholarship essays, cover letters for job applications, other similar writing. From this program, we may find our Looking Back/Around/Ahead writing to be useful.
  - Feel free to use these if helpful, or ignore if not.
  - There are many narrative strategies, writing styles, genres, etc. that could work for our Academic Statement. Our faculty leave these choices up to us, and will only ask "Does it read well?" and "Does it describe your work?". Examples of Academic Statements that can give a sense of the broad range of possibilities can be found at <http://evergreen.edu/academicstatement/contest.htm>
  - It's probably the case that our Academic Statements would be well served with a clear introduction, a clear conclusion, and clear body paragraphs.
  - Depending on where we are in our academic trajectory (early, middle, near graduation), we would probably want to emphasize different things. For those of us closer to graduation, this might involve framing our past and current work to make sense of that work for an outside audience. For those of us with some time left in our undergraduate careers, we might want to describe a potential Academic Plan, Map, or Dream and how to best plan for that. Our faculty hope that the Looking Back/Around/Ahead elements can (should?) be part of an Academic Statement, and encourage us to consider them.
  - While only the final version that is included in our transcript has the 750 word limit, our faculty encourage us to try to get close to that limit even in our interim versions.
3. Given the importance of the Academic Statement, we will devote class time on our very last class day of the quarter for a Peer Review workshop session on your Academic Statements, where you will share your Academic Statement with your classmates, and get feedback from them that you can incorporate into the version you will submit with your Portfolio. More details will follow.

## **Activity II: (20 minutes) Self-Evaluation**

- You may work by yourself for this activity, or are welcome to work in a small group.
- Make sure you have copies of the Program Learning Goals, the Program Activities Log (updated through week 9), and an updated Assignments and Assessments Account (if you're a Chem Lite student, make sure you have the appropriate version).
- Note that a completed Program Activities Log and completed Assignments and Assessments Account are required to be turned in as part of your Portfolio. (If faculty still have material you have previously submitted, you'll get them back in time to complete these).

In contrast to the Academic Statement, your Self-Evaluation is concerned with your current program, course, or contract. Of course, there may be connections to past or future work (e.g. skills or content from prior work that you struggled with or wanted to deepen, or future work that requires the skills/content from your current program, course, or contract). But for the most part, the focus should be on your current work.

Also in contrast to the Academic Statement, the audience for your Self-Evaluation is much more focused: it consists of you (now and in the future) and your faculty (current and future). This is an internal document, and while it may serve as raw material for your Academic Statement, its narrower focus and audience means that it is a good place to be frank and straightforward about successes and short-comings, and about concrete, achievable goals for improvement.

- Your program-exiting Self-Evaluation should begin with an Introduction: brief description of previous academic, professional, or personal experience that brought you to this program, possibly including goals, and orients your reader to the essay. A good introduction describes your intentions for the program and frames your learning in terms of those goals. An interim Self-Evaluation (for continuing students) should accomplish some of this.
- Your program-exiting Self-Evaluation should end with a Conclusion: next steps for your academic work or career. A good conclusion summarizes your accomplishments and/or discusses how your learning in the program will help you achieve future goals. An interim Self-Evaluation might not accomplish much of this.

The body of an interim Self-Evaluation for Matter & Motion will consist of examining each of the Program Learning Goals and writing openly, honestly, but also constructively, about your successes and shortcomings in meeting those goals.

- Successes should be described briefly and supported with evidence.
- Shortcomings should be described briefly and accompanied by realistic action items for improvement (or, as appropriate, a brief articulation of your thoughtful rejection of that Program Learning Goal).

**Given the shift in program faculty and program structure, a critically reflective Self-Evaluation will help you start winter quarter with a thoughtful foundation and realistic goals. Since many of the scaffolding elements in calculus and physics (e.g. reading responses, weekly quizzes) won't be present, you'll need to consider how to deploy any lessons you've learned this quarter on into winter quarter.**