

Academic Statement Workshop I

Mapping the Territory

Tue. Oct. 28, 2014, 1.5 hours

One primary goal of your Academic Statement is to make sense of your academic trajectory. This might involve framing your past work (highlighting certain elements, minimizing others) to impose sense on (or reveal the sense of) that work. For most of you, it should also involve making thoughtful and informed choices about what makes sense to do next, and how best to prepare for that. This workshop is designed to help you look back on your academic work, talk stock of your current work, and look ahead to your future work. By completing these activities, you should develop significant raw material for our future Academic Statement workshops.

Part I: Looking Back. (stop after 20 minutes)

What previous decisions, pressures, accidents, dilemmas, serendipity, etc. have brought you to this point in your academic trajectory? In addition to whatever you might brainstorm up right now, also pay particular attention to other artifacts of your academic path: in particular, any drafts of your Orientation Essay, Academic Statement, past Self-Evaluations, or other written work in which you discuss how you got here. As possible, assemble any brainstorm writing you have just completed along with relevant portions of any of the written artifacts into a single document under the heading "Looking Back".

Part II: Looking Around. (stop after 30 minutes)

What are your goals for your current academic work, including your work in Models of Motion and your work at Evergreen in general? How do your goals align with program-level and institution-level goals? Review the expectations and outcomes from Evergreen and Models of Motion by doing a web search to investigate Evergreen's Five Foci of Learning and the Expectations of an Evergreen Graduate and by re-reading our Program Learning Goals (which you can find in the Syllabus). Note which of the Foci, Expectations, and Learning Goals for which you have made satisfactory progress (it's important that you be able to articulate that progress as specifically as possible using concrete evidence), those which you are dissatisfied with your progress towards, and any which you are not interested or able to pursue (for these, it is particularly important that you can articulate a defensible position; it's within your agency to reject any of these expectations but such a choice should be thoughtful). Assemble your responses and add to your document under the heading "Looking Around".

Part III: Looking Ahead. (stop after 30 minutes)

Read the following categories and follow along for whichever category fits you best. If no category resonates particularly with you, choose your own task that you judge follows with the spirit of the activity. Indicate your chosen or made-up category, assemble your responses, and add to your document under the heading "Looking Ahead".

- Planning to stay at Evergreen and focus in math or computer science?** Look at the Evergreen Course Catalog for this year (2014-15) and next year (2015-16); you should be able to find both online. The reason to look in both years is that many math and computer science programs are offered on a two-year cycle, such that something that is offered this year may not be offered next year but would be the year after that. Identify programs and courses that offer more introductory, intermediate, or advanced work in math. Read the descriptions, and pay particular attention to any implicit or explicit information about pre-requisites and/or how to prepare for that program. Are you, or are you in process of becoming, prepared for those later programs?

- Planning to stay at Evergreen and focus in physics?** Look at the Evergreen Course Catalog for this year (2014-15) and next year (2015-16); you should be able to find both online. The reason to look in both years is that many physics programs are offered on a two-year cycle, such that something that is offered this year may not be offered next year but would be the year after that. Identify programs and courses that offer more introductory, intermediate, or advanced work in physics. Read the descriptions, and pay particular attention to any implicit or explicit information about pre-requisites and/or how to prepare for that program. Are you, or are you in process of becoming, prepared for those later programs?

- **Planning to stay at Evergreen and focus in another natural science?** Look at the Evergreen Course Catalog for this year (2014-15) and next year (2015-16); you should be able to find both online. The reason to look in both years is that many science programs are offered on a two-year cycle, such that something that is offered this year may not be offered next year but would be the year after that. Identify programs and courses that offer more introductory, intermediate, or advanced work in other natural sciences. Read the descriptions, and pay particular attention to any implicit or explicit information about pre-requisites and/or how to prepare for that program. Are you, or are you in process of becoming, prepared for those later programs?
- **Planning to stay at Evergreen, focus in math or science, and already have your academic plans laid out?** Review the Expectations of an Evergreen Graduate. Which of those capacities can be developed through math or science study? Which seem harder to achieve through math or science study? Look at the Evergreen Course Catalog for this year (2014-15) and next year (2015-16); you should be able to find both online. Identify areas of the curriculum where you might be able to develop the capacities in the Expectations that you won't be able to in your math and science study, and see where there is room for that work in your academic plans.
- **Planning to stay at Evergreen and not focus in math or science?** Look at the Evergreen Course Catalog for next year (2015-16), which you should be able to find online. Identify programs and courses that are in subjects you find intriguing or do plan to focus in. Read the descriptions, and pay particular attention to any implicit or explicit information about pre-requisites and/or how to prepare for that program. Are you, or are you in process of becoming, prepared for those later programs? In what particular ways will your work in Models of Motion help prepare you for non-math or non-science work?
- **Planning to transfer from Evergreen to another undergraduate institution?** If you haven't already, identify one or two schools you are considering transferring to. Look particularly at the transfer admissions requirements. Do you apply to transfer to the school or to a major or program at that school? What admissions requirements does your past college work (Evergreen or elsewhere) fulfill? In particular, what does your work in Models of Motion fulfill? In many cases, the application essay is of particular importance for transfer students – an Academic Statement might be easily modified into a compelling transfer essay.
- **Planning to go to graduate school?** If you haven't already, identify one or two top graduate programs in your chosen area. Look at the graduate admissions requirements and, see how well you meet those requirements based on your past and current work, and identify any gaps and figure out how to fill those gaps meaningfully. If you already have a fully laid out graduate school plan (good for you!), it might be interesting to investigate why that program has made the subject areas covered in Models of Motion an admissions requirement – what does your graduate program claim that study in calculus or physics will do for your focused advanced study in their field? In almost all cases, your statement of purpose (letter of intent, etc.) is key for graduate school admission – An Academic Statement should serve well in crafting your statement of purpose.
- **Planning to take a leave of absence?** If you haven't already, investigate how to take a leave of absence, paying particular attention to any financial aid implications. Whether you are done with school for the short or long term or you plan to return to Evergreen as soon as you can, figure out your exit strategy and especially a re-entry strategy (when to come back to school – year, quarter, for what program? etc.) An Academic Statement can help with such strategies. Also, in most cases, students who leave school enter the work force; a candid but careful Academic Statement might easily be modified into a cover letter for job applications.

**When time is up,
save your document with a useful name to your Cubbie and other places
where you will have easy access.**