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EDITING SAMPLE 1

Type: Track changes

Number of edits: 1

Description: This document is a personal statement for an application for a program at Stanford University. The author wanted editing and proofreading for grammar, punctuation, rhetoric, and syntax. All my edits, suggested edits, or comments can be viewed with my overall summary at the end.

Stanford Prompt (the author's guidelines):

Describe in your statement of purpose:

- Your reasons for applying to the proposed program at Stanford and your preparation for this field of study
- Your research and study interests
- Future career plans and other aspects of your background and interests which may aid the admission committee in evaluating your aptitude and motivation for graduation study

Since I can remember, the natural world and the human cultures that populate it have fascinated me. My curiosity about the world around me profoundly influenced the course of my life. My nascent interests eventually led me to graduate magna cum laude from Florida International University's Honors College with a B.A. in Geography and International Relations. I also completed professional experiences with the U.S. Department of State as a Summer Clerical and Stay-in-School Intern, and later with the National Geographic Society as a Geography Intern. At this particular crossroads in my life, I am thoroughly convinced that a graduate education combining my passion for environmental and international studies will grant me the knowledge and experience necessary to successfully pursue a meaningful environmental policy career in the arena of international affairs.

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Commented [PB1]: Great sentence.

As a young person, my multiracial heritage, parents' military legacies, frequent moves, and exposure to multiple cultures and environments enriched my life and laid the initial foundation for eventual aims in environmental policy and international civil service. My mother's struggle with cancer also had an indelible effect on me. When I was five years old, my mother was first diagnosed with terminal brain cancer. Her spirit would prove more resilient than the cancer however and fortunately she went into remission for ten years until 2003. Following a second surgery and treatment, the cancer would return a last time in 2005 while I was in my senior year of high school. The loss of my mother to brain cancer is something I continue to struggle with. However the memories of her infinite love, strength, and wisdom continue to comfort me. Likewise, her example of courageous independence as a young woman in the Air Force motivates me to work hard in pursuit of my academic and professional goals.

Commented [PB2]: This is more a comment on the rhetoric. This is a very personal admission, one which can really drive home the questions they want you to answer. Your last sentence really has a powerful meaning behind it. I think you could tap more into that power by replacing some of the cancer info with info of her accomplishments and leadership, then that last sentence will shine like a star. For instance, what did your mother do over those 10 years of remission? You want to connect how you look up to her with how you strive to equal or surpass that effort.

Moving frequently as a young adult due to my parents' Air Force service, and my father's continued career with the military, exposed me early on to a diversity of environments and cultures. The ecological and cultural diversity I encountered in the environments of Oahu, Hawaii and Miami, Florida, specifically, served to ignite my interest in a variety of environments and cultures. My interest in world cultures, international relations, and development studies led me to initially study international relations at Florida State University, Miami Dade College, and Florida International University. The dynamic fields of environmental science and natural geography, particularly the topics of climate change, globalization, political ecology, gender and the environment, and sustainability intrigued me, and fed my research and academic interests. After completing introductory geography courses, I realized that also majoring in geography could allow me to fulfill my environmental, cultural, and social aspirations in chorus.

Commented [PB3]: No ; after geography. You need a complete sentence for that to work.

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Commented [PB5]: Rhetoric again. You might be able to switch this sentence around to say 'because of my passion for environmental issues and civic engagement, I sought meaningful volunteer and employment opportunities.

Volunteer and employment experiences have furthered my passion for environmental studies and community service. While at FIU, I volunteered with the local Service for Peace student organization on community enrichment projects and additionally assisted with environmental rehabilitation and clean-up projects at Everglades National Park. I still periodically enjoy volunteering with Everglades National Park and the South Florida Wildlife Center on environmental projects and by assisting with the rehabilitation of injured and orphaned native wildlife.

Professional experiences with the State Department Office of Inspector General and Office of Foreign Missions as a Summer Clerical and Stay-in-School Intern, respectively, afforded me valuable experience and insight into the day-to-day work of the Department of State. Additionally, my experience as a Geography Intern with the Education Department of the National Geographic Society gave me valuable experience with the non-profit side of an organization I had long admired and allowed me to contribute to the advancement of geography education in the U.S.

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At this stage, my cumulative experiences have reaffirmed my research interests in the particular dynamics of climate change, globalization, political ecology, gender and the environment, and sustainability and have motivated me to pursue a professional career in the arena of international relations and environmental policy. I am especially interested in working as a Foreign Service with the Department of State or as an international civil servant with an NGO or international organization working on environmental, health, and/or development issues. The idea of working as a Foreign Service Officer with the U.S. Department of State has particularly intrigued me since I first heard a Diplomat in Residence speaking at Miami-Dade College about what it is like to live and work as an FSO. My interests were further solidified after working with current and former Foreign Service Officers as a Summer Clerical and Stay-in-School Intern with the U.S. Department of State. The advice and experiences shared by my former colleagues inspired me to continually pursue a meaningful career.

Ultimately, I envision myself in a career that continuously ignites my passion and allows me to fulfill my creative and professional potential through work that has positive impacts and is meaningful. Completing a Master of Arts degree with the Ford Dorsey Program in International Policy Studies would afford me the prestigious and unparalleled opportunity to initiate a graduate degree program in one of the most enriching and diverse academic environments available. I particularly appreciate the program's interdisciplinary nature, which encourages utilizing a variety of the excellent academic resources available throughout Stanford University. I also enjoy the program's focused efforts to match students' individual skills and experience to their eventual career aspirations and professional objectives. I plan to complete the program's five pre-requisites this upcoming spring and summer and am already registered to take statistics, macro-economics, and microeconomics this spring. Through the course of the Energy, Environment and Natural Resources track, I hope to contribute my unique perspective and skills, while learning from the distinct perspectives of my peers and the unique research experiences and backgrounds of the staff and faculty. I had the opportunity earlier this summer to visit the campus and meet with a program coordinator, and I really appreciated learning more about the program from Ms. Castana Aguirre and exploring both the campus and the local bay area. My previous experiences have imbued me with a solid foundation in foreign affairs, geography, and environmental studies, and I strongly believe the Ford Dorsey Program in International Policy Studies may afford me the amazing opportunity to gain an Energy, Environment, and Natural Resources M.A. which will grant the education and experience necessary to engage in a meaningful environmental policy career.

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Commented [PB6]: You just said meaningful in previous paragraph so maybe "...positive impacts and satisfies my intrinsic (productivities, leanings, goals, etc)

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Commented [PB7]: You can make this last statement a two way street. You can learn a lot from them, but the program can benefit from having your variety of living experiences, work experiences, and your willingness to engage with the program after graduation.

Overall comments: you have a good first draft here. You're effective in several places; however, the statement gets bogged down in some redundancy and some generalized, cliché-y statements. I think you could pare away 200 words. Do you have to have 1000 words? For instance, I think you mention the state department experience 2-3 times with only one place explaining how it connects to your interests, etc. I think you should consider these edits. Consider where you can

cut down on redundancy. Make some calls. Then send me the second draft. This is an iterative process. You also have good writing skills, which I appreciate. The first page was riveting.