Moody College Writing Support Program
Personal Statement Brainstorming Worksheet

This sheet is meant to jump-start your thought process prior to starting your personal statement essay. Most personal statement prompts will ask you to expand on one or all of these sections. In answering these questions, be as specific as possible.

Background
- What led you to the field of speech-language pathology?
- When did you first realize that you were interested in the field?
  - Coursework
    - What courses were most interesting to you? Why?
    - Which topics did you find yourself thinking about outside of class?
    - What are you seeking in a profession? How does speech pathology satisfy these criteria?
  - Previous work experiences that led you to this field
    - Did you work in a setting where you interacted with individuals with communication disorders?
  - Personal experiences
    - Do you know someone with a communication disorder?
    - How did your personal interest become an academic interest?

Current Experiences:
- Clinical experience
  - Have you worked or volunteered in a...
    - Speech and language clinic?
    - Rehabilitation center?
    - School?
    - Program for individuals with communication disorders?
  - Describe your experience, including your responsibilities, daily tasks, and observations
  - If you have not had hands-on, clinical experience, what skills have you gained in other settings that will be helpful and functional in the clinical setting?
- Research
  - What does your research experience look like? Do you work or volunteer in a research lab? Do you read research articles?
  - Why did you pursue these opportunities?
  - What have you learned about research and its connection to clinical practice?
  - What topic area do you want to explore? What are you curious about?
  - Do you think research is important? Why?
- Other
  - You might be involved in an academic or extracurricular activity that is not explicitly speech-language pathology-oriented but plays a big role in your life. Does this involvement relate to speech pathology in any way? What skills have
you gained through this involvement that could be helpful in your future as a speech pathologist?

- For each experience above, indicate the following:
  - Skills you used or gained
  - Challenges
  - Accomplishments
  - Personal qualities you used in that experience
  - What surprised you about the setting, population, or the skills you needed to learn or use?
  - How do your experiences connect or compare to what you learn in class?
  - How do your experiences connect to current trends or advancements in our field?
  - This experience made me want to explore... (what came next?)

Future Goals:
- How do your past experiences connect to your future goals?
- What is your goal as a speech-language pathologist?
  - Population of interest?
  - Particular issue you hope to address?

University-specific information:
- How does this specific graduate program support your goals?
- What is most important to you in a graduate school experience? How does this graduate program support this value?
- What does this university offer that you cannot find anywhere else?
- What makes you a good fit for this university?
- Specific graduate school components to explore and possibly mention in your personal statement essay, if relevant:
  - Clinical externship opportunities and placements
  - Thesis or no thesis option
  - Research labs and opportunities
  - Elective courses versus no elective courses
  - Study abroad opportunities
  - Bilingual certifications
  - Interprofessional education and interdisciplinary exposure
  - Funding and finances
  - Unique opportunities or programs