

(This statement was written by a student applying to a clinical psychology doctoral program.)

I became initially interested in psychology when I was helping a friend who was having problems at home and was considering suicide. I felt so helpless trying to deal with his problems that I decided to learn more about human behavior and how to help those in need. This experience led me to enroll in an introductory psychology class in order to understand more about what motivates people. I have become more and more interested in the field of clinical psychology during my four years as an undergraduate psychology major.

In addition to my educational experience, I actively pursued work experience in psychology-related fields. I worked as a resident assistant in one of the dormitories during my junior year. In this role, I encountered students who had problems relating to their family, depression, suicide, alcohol, and drugs. I attained an internship position during my senior year as a residential supervisor at the Indianapolis Center for Neuropsychological Rehabilitation, a facility dedicated to teaching brain-injured individuals not only to deal with their handicaps, but to overcome them. I witnessed counseling of both clients and their families, and I learned to administer and score several psychological tests used in clinical assessment (e.g., the Wechsler Memory Scale and the MMPI). My work experience has proven to me how much more I need to learn before I can attain my goal of becoming an accomplished researcher and teacher.

I became interested in research as a sophomore when I enrolled in a senior level research class. By the time I graduate, I will have presented a total of five papers on a variety of topics at undergraduate research conferences. My experience with the first study, an examination of mood effects on time perception, led to other research endeavors on topics including student evaluation of faculty, academic integrity, and comparisons of personality profiles of brain-injured individuals. The relevance of two of these projects, academic honesty and student evaluation of faculty, led the President of my college, to invite me to present my results at two Open College Forums. This is the first time a student has presented at an Open College Forum. At Purdue University, I am specifically interested in the research efforts of Harvey Ashland (schizophrenia), Nancy Bennett (child adolescent psychotherapy outcomes), and Thomas Ginsburg (clinical, personality, and community assessment). As an undergraduate, I have learned the importance of working closely with members of the faculty. A great deal can be accomplished by working with someone who is already an expert in the field.

I have become firmly committed to the beliefs that the most appropriate way to answer “real world” questions is through basic research and that these answers should be communicated in a professional manner to those audiences who can benefit most from them. My undergraduate experiences have inspired me to continue my education in graduate school so I can further my research and make meaningful contributions to psychology.

