UC Personal Statement Examples

Example 1:

If given an eye test with the standard Snellen Eye chart (y'know, the one with all the letters on it) you will be asked to stand 20 ft away, cover one eye and read off the letters from the chart as they get increasingly smaller. If you can read up to the lines marked "20" at 20 feet away, you have normal 20/20 vision and your eyes can separate contours that are 1.75 mm apart. Knowing visual acuity is important because it helps diagnose vision problems.

But the challenge? Usually people have to go into eye doctors and get an eye test to determine their acuity. However, since more than 40% of Americans don't go to an eye doctor on a regular basis and access to eye care is extremely rare and usually unavailable in third world countries, many people who need glasses don't know it and live with blurred vision.

To tackle this problem, I've spent the last four months at the Wyss Institute at Yale University working on an individual project supervised by Yale Medical School professor Maureen Shore. I'm coding a program that measures visual acuity and can determine what glasses prescription someone would need. My goal is to configure this into a mobile app so that it's easy for someone to determine if he or she needs glasses. I hope to continue using my programming skills to make the benefits of research more accessible.

If this technology isn't accessible to society, we're doing a disservice to humanity. The skills, experience, and network I will build at the computer science department will help me devise solutions to problems and bring the benefits of research to the public.

Example 2:

In 10th and 11th grade, I explored the world of China with my classmates through feasts of mapo tofu, folk games and calligraphy. As I developed a familial bond with my classmates and teacher, the class became a chance to discover myself. As a result, I was inspired to take AP Chinese.

But there was a problem: my small school didn't offer AP Chinese.

So I took matters into my own hands. I asked my AP advisor for a list of other advisors at schools near me, but he didn't have one. I emailed the College Board, who told me they couldn't help, so I visited the websites of twenty other high schools and used the information available to find an advisor willing to let me test at his or her school. I emailed all the advisors I could find within a fifty-mile radius.

But all I got back were no's.

I asked myself: Why was I trying so hard to take an AP test?

After some thought, I realized the driving force behind my decision wasn't academic. I'd traveled to Taiwan in the past, but at times I felt like an outsider because I could not properly communicate with my family. I wanted to be able to hear my grandpa's stories in his own tongue about escaping

from China during the revolution. I wanted to buy vegetables from the lady at the market and not be known as a visitor. I wanted to gossip with my cousins about things that didn't just occur during my visit. I wanted to connect.

Despite the lack of support I received from both my school and the College Board, I realized that if I truly wanted this, I'd have to depend on myself. So I emailed ten more advisors and, after weeks, I finally received a 'maybe' telling me to wait until midnight to register as a late tester. At 12:10 am on April 19, I got my yes.

Language is not just a form of communication for me. Through, Chinese I connect with my heritage, my people, and my country.