Mastering the Personal Statement

What should your personal statement include?
- Interest in the field (background - your early interest)
- Past research experience
- Include academic awards, research experiences, presentations, and results
- Interest in the school
- The graduate center/program – explain why you're applying to a particular department
- Faculty with whom you'd like to work
- Planned contribution to the field of study (short term/ long term goals)

Other tips/insight:
- If you're going to mention a particular faculty member's research, you'll want to touch base with that person *before* you include them in your personal statement. Let them know about your particular interest in their work as well as your interest in applying to the program. *Send them a copy of your resume or CV as an attachment in your email*.

- Be careful about cutting and pasting when applying to different universities.

- Make sure you're applying to the correct campus!

- You need to be able to speak the language of the discipline in your statement; speak to the research you've done and how this makes you a good fit for the program.

- Don't focus too much on personal things. Focus on the specifics of the research you want to be involved in.

Questions to ask when drafting a personal statement:
- Why do you want to go to graduate school?
- Why do you want to go to that particular school?
- Who do you want to work with?
- Why are you a good fit? (i.e. research skills and experiences)
- Who else would match your interests (i.e. faculty members and other grad students in the program)?
- Who can speak well of you (i.e. in letters of reference)?
- What do you want to do?
- What is your passion?
- What would you like to contribute to a particular field of study?