

Personal Statement

I spent many years in my primary school as an amateur model for my aunt, who was then a fine arts major in the local university. Of course, that was one of the most beautiful things that ever happen to me. To see the full-length portrait of myself come into being under her dexterous and magical brush, I could never forget the glow in her smile when she was at work. However, one day she just stopped painting. It was quite a long time until I figured out why she could have given up the thing she had been training for her entire life; one of her close friends was killed in a wrangle during a hiking and painting trip initiated by my aunt. She could never stop blaming herself. Since then, two questions have long haunted me:

What could have been done to prevent such a tragedy, if not an unpremeditated crime?

How can I bring back happiness to my aunt?

As a keen student, I tried to find answers through wide reading and exploration. With easy access to XXX Library in XXX, I indulged myself in review of books in literature, psychology and history in my high school, which helped me to lay a solid foundation of liberal arts. With an initial understanding of some pioneers in modern psychology, such as Sigmund Freud and Burrhus Frederic Skinner, and their works, I started to view many social phenomena under a microscope of criticism and analysis. Meanwhile, I became more aware of what I would like to pursue for my college study. That is why I chose social work as the major for my undergraduate studies without hesitation, even though my parents seemed to be a little concerned about my “disregard of utilitarianism” in that decision.

Among all the benefits I have obtained from the vigorous training in XXX, Beijing, including the integrative course design, the stress on both theoretical and practical involvement and the cultivation of its students’ creativity and problem-solving skills, I would like to mention how I enhanced myself in terms of data collection & analysis techniques, as well as being pragmatic through multi-perspective interpretation. My strength in mathematical thoughts provided me with great convenience when I conducted social research projects.

In 2008, I carried out an investigation regarding the social status discrimination in the media coverage of the Internet based on the analysis of a prestigious website, XXXX, of both its contents and audience’s reception. With the help of my advisor, Associate Professor XXX XXX, and three other members, I accomplished the design of a questionnaire, the organization of interviews with some of the website’s editors, and the statistical work assisted by SPSS software. The corresponding article, titled “XXX XXX Discrimination on the Internet--A Case Study Based on the XXX of XXX in China,” won high praise from my teachers. Though there is still a long way for me to go, I was quite happy about the application of the quantitative research method and successful demonstration of my hypothesis.

During the summers of 2007 and 2008, I took an internship in the Anti-Poverty Program Office in XXX Municipal Government, where I gained more hands-on experiences in social work and became more determined for advanced studies of crime via a sociological and political angle. In

the project titled “Helping the XXX” in July 2007, I dealt with the heads of educational bureaus of both cities--Ningbo and Guiyang--and some student representatives. I learnt about how more students benefit from the economic advances and educational cause development. One teacher representative from Guizhou Province raised his concerns about the increasing serious phenomena of juvenile delinquencies in China. I was more than just touched by his speech. For the following half month, I took the initiative to contact the police office, aiming to access the recent records regarding minors’ crimes. Though I was discouraged by some staff’s indifference to my request and their questioning about my abilities as a researcher, I insisted on my pursuits. I also managed to interview some principals of junior high schools about their efforts in preventing the juvenile delinquencies at school. One year later, after the earthquake hit Wenchuan, Sichuan Province, I assisted in the organization of class resumption in Ningbo for the orphans who lost their parents in the earthquake. All of these experiences propelled me to grow, both as an individual and social worker.

The graduate program in criminal justice at the University of XXX is my only choice for my further study for many reasons. Its well-combined curricular design with solid grounding in theory, research and community engagement can fully prepare me for many potential careers—counselor, teacher, and government officer. I am thrilled to see the list of course descriptions, which will equip me with a full-scale understanding of the American criminal justice system of policing, adjudication and corrections. The close interaction with the well-informed and experienced faculty will further polish my research aptitude. I am mostly excited about the opportunities of teachers’ assistantship and internship since both of them would broaden my horizons and help me to learn more about American culture and society. Venturing out of the traditional classroom setting will place me into a vanguard ground to develop professionalism through close involvement in real-life circumstances in the criminal justice system.

If I could be admitted into your program, I will make full use of my strong interdisciplinary background, my competency in both computer and language skills, and my wide exposure to social sciences in order to serve as a useful addition. My knowledge of China and its legal system, my cultural background and my rich work experience as a social worker in community, government and non-profit organizations are also strong assets. I am planning to engage myself in many cutting-edge research projects under the resourceful guidance of your faculty. I am also interested in joining your Criminal Justice Club to interrelate with other students.

Though it has been 12 years since my aunt went through her crisis and I am still hunting for more proper answers to those two questions, I am on a journey of discovery—to know more about the world and myself. Being part of the Masters program in criminal justice in your esteemed school is a necessary and indispensable step for me to be part of the cause of seeking more welfare for the beings in our society. On hearing the knock of my earnest curiosity and determination, would you please grant me the key to unlocking my potential?