

Background Information:

Taylor Harris* is a prospective medical student who approached me for help with his application to University of Arizona College of Medicine-Phoenix. The secondary essays that Taylor had written were filled with nods to his various and impressive accomplishments, credentials, and experiences. However, what was lacking in each essay, content-wise, was an explicitly stated “central claim” to ground readers and point all other details back to the prompt. His essays had strong muscles, but no skeleton, so to speak.

In the first edit for the essay below, I wrote a brief introduction that responds to the prompt directly, and reiterated the claim in the last sentence in a way that was punchy and memorable. Before the second edit and final clean, I asked Taylor to write a brief anecdote about his time volunteering for Phoenix’s Wesley Center. As a reader, I appreciate the power of a specific anecdote to help one humanize (and remember!) the writer. As I edited his essay for sentence fluency and grammatical consistency, I was able to free up enough word space for such an anecdote (with plenty to spare!).

*Name changed for protection

Final draft:

The ability to fit in is more easily felt than described, so I would like to point to circumstantial evidence. Indeed, I have already been acquainted with the positive culture that comes with being affiliated with UA COM-Phoenix.

I have been fortunate to spend many hours in clinical and service settings with current UA COM-Phoenix students. My first exposure with UA COM-Phoenix was when I volunteered at Hopefest, an event that renders hundreds of medical procedures to the needy in the Phoenix area. I developed relationships with many UA COM-Phoenix students as we worked and had fun together during that day of service. The students suggested I continue working with them and faculty at the nearby Wesley Center.

At the Wesley Center I had the opportunity to work with the overseeing physician Dr. Kathleen Brite and UA COM-Phoenix medical students. I was impressed with the level of understanding, awareness, and compassion towards the Hispanic neighborhood and the effect the Wesley Center has on the local community. The student servant leadership I observed and learned was invaluable. I remember vividly a patient who as an addict that came into the clinic. Dr. Brite and the students treated this patient with a higher level of care than I had ever seen demonstrated before. I was inspired by the genuine concern, empathy, and ability to relate to this patient. I felt unity between the patient, students, and doctor in their goal for treatment.

These experiences have allowed me to see what I can become by attending UA COM-Phoenix. I can easily recognize the quality of education and skills of students I worked and associated with. I want to be a practicing physician in Arizona who gives back to the local, rural, and underprivileged communities. My experience with UACOM-Phoenix tells me that my goals align with the mission of the school. I look forward to being part of this culture and continuing to have an impact on the community in which I live. I believe I will fit within the UACOM-Phoenix culture because, frankly, I already do.

Original Draft:

I feel having culture diversity is catalyst to learning and becoming a physician of excellence. I have been fortunate to have spent many hours in clinical and service settings with current UA COM-Phoenix students. My first exposure with UA COM-Phoenix was when I volunteered at Hopefest. This in an event rendering hundreds of medical procedures to the needy in the Phoenix area. I developed relationships, worked with, and had fun with many UA COM-Phoenix students that day of service. The students suggested I continue working with them and faculty at the nearby Wesley Center.

At The Wesley Center I had the opportunity to work with the overseeing physician Dr. Kathleen Brite and UA COM- Phoenix medical students. This exposed me to the positive culture that comes with being affiliated with UA COM. I look forward to being part of this culture and continue to have an impact on the community in which I live. I want to be a physician who practices in Arizona and gives back to the local, rural, and underprivileged communities. I have learned great lessons from the physicians and students of UA COM. I know this is a culture of collaboration, integrity, and excellence. Most importantly, I have observed and learned student servant leadership. I was impressed with the level of understanding, awareness, and compassion towards the Hispanic neighborhood and the effect the Wesley Center has on the local community.

These experiences have made me aware of the potential of what I can become by attending UA COM Phoenix. I witnessed and recognized the quality of education and skills obtained from the students I worked and associated with. This has instilled within me the vision and goal of UA COM which “inspires and trains exemplary physicians, scientists and leaders to optimize health and health care in Arizona and beyond.” I know attending UA COM-Phoenix would provide an atmosphere to become a physician who would exemplify, live and practice the schools mission and purpose here in Arizona.