**Law School Personal Statement Brainstorming Worksheet**

1. Consider the experiences that have made you who you are. Nothing is too minor to list!

	1. What are some *personal* experiences that have shaped you? (trips, clubs, activities, volunteering, etc.)
	2. What are some *professional* experiences you’ve had? (include formal and informal work experiences)
	3. What are some meaningful *academic* experiences you’ve had? (consider classes in any field—what class changed the way you think the most?)
2. Go back through your examples and start making a list next to each one: what purpose would each serve in a personal statement? What qualities of yours does it highlight?
3. Free write on the back of this sheet about one experience that would help your readers learn about you, keeping in mind the purposes you identified in Step 2.

**The Importance of Purpose and Highlighting Your Qualities**

Here are some paragraphs from a personal statement for a science scholarship that I wrote as an undergraduate. The “original” paragraph was my first draft. Then, I did an exercise (similar to #2) where I identified the purpose of each of my experiences and the qualities it highlighted. I wrote the “revision” paragraph based on this exercise.

**Imagine you are on the scholarship committee. How do the revisions change your reading of this paragraph?**

Original:

As a member of the museum staff at the Maria Mitchell Association, I was responsible giving natural history tours, presenting our research to conservation organizations and leading insect exploration walks for visitors of all ages. I also created and installed a new museum exhibit on osprey migration using data downloaded from a local radio-tagged bird. I was invited to present the osprey data at the Consortium of Nantucket Naturalists, a yearly meeting of the island’s conservation and outreach organizations.

Revision:

**In addition to laboratory research, I have also focused on science communication and public outreach.** During my two summers at the non-profit Maria Mitchell Association (MMA), I fulfilled the role of curator, teacher and researcher all in one day. As a member of the museum staff, I was responsible giving natural history tours, presenting our research to conservation organizations and leading insect exploration walks for visitors of all ages. I also created and installed a new museum exhibit on osprey migration using data downloaded from a local radio-tagged bird. **These experiences honed my ability to translate complex scientific information to a variety of audiences.**