

Personal Statement

My college experience has been shaky, at best. Technically my first semester began in 2009. At the time, I didn't take a lot of my classes seriously and nearly failed my first semester. I was so upset at the time, that I told myself that I never wanted to see another chemistry problem again. In the Spring of 2010, desperate for money and a change in my life, I joined the United States Navy, but I didn't volunteer for just any assignment, I volunteered for the submarine force. At the time, I had no idea what I was getting myself into. All my life I knew that I wanted to be a doctor. I didn't know what kind or how I would get there, but I knew that I wanted to be a doctor no matter what. Though I have hit some stepping stones in the past, and continue to do so today, nothing has or will stop me from reaching my goal. What I am about to write is not just about my past, but about the hard work I continue to put in today, and how I am one hundred percent confident that I will reach my goal and become a doctor.

I am not originally from the state of Virginia. I was born and raised in a small town in central Oklahoma. In 2009 I had my first full-time semester in college. Times were not easy for me then. I still lived at home, but I had to pay my own tuition and make my car, gas, and insurance payments. Needless to say, I was a little overwhelmed. Because I was working so much, I didn't dedicate enough time to study for exams. Back in high school, I could get away with not studying and still do well on exams, but that was not the case in this situation. I made a D in every class except my math class. I was depressed, living at home, and had little money. I thought to myself that there must be another way.

Six months after the semester ended, I joined the Navy and was off to boot camp. Because I was so desperate to leave, I took the first job that was available to me. That job would be a sonar technician onboard a nuclear submarine. What most people do not know, is that your first year onboard a submarine is spent studying and doing oral interviews so that you can learn your job and the ship. So, when you're not physically working, you're expected to be constantly studying. Because of this demand, I averaged around 4 hours of sleep for every day that I spent underway.

It was at this point that I began to miss going to school. Being onboard taught me how to both manage my life, and manage my studies. My entire four years onboard the USS Helena was the hardest time of my life. Out of the four years, I did four 6-month deployments. The most consecutive days I spent underwater was eighty-eight days. When you're underway on a submarine the only communication you have with the outside world is via an occasional email. Life could feel lonely onboard. Even when the boat is in port, a typical workday is usually 12 hours, and once every four days you're required to spend the night onboard.

After a little over eight years in the Navy, I got out and began to take classes at Old Dominion University. My first semester I retook general chemistry and made an A. After that I felt confident that I have what it takes to be a doctor. Life is still challenging. Managing a budget for rent, and studying for my classes still requires a lot of work. I am studying biochemistry and mathematics. Because I am on the GI bill, I must remain a full-time student during the summer semester, which is especially challenging. I still have a long road ahead of me with a lot more

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challenges waiting to present themselves, but with the support of friends and family, I know that I will reach my goal.