

Example 7 (2015)

The moment I decided I wanted to pursue a career in audiology, I was sitting behind a two-way mirror in the Speech and Hearing Clinic. Frantically scribbling away notes about the appointment on a piece of scratch paper, I was absorbing every single event that was occurring in front of me, even though I had no knowledge about any of the tests the graduate student was performing or even standards for basic hearing. All I knew is that I wanted to learn and see so much more of what was occurring in the clinic and come back to observe another appointment as soon as I could. I walked into that observation room just wondering about the field of audiology, and I walked out of it inspired and fully motivated to start this career path.

First, let me rewind a few years before this experience, to my freshman year of college at a university far from home. I had entered the Communication Sciences and Disorders major just because I knew I wanted to help people, and thought that maybe speech pathology would be a career I would want to pursue. However, while I found speech anatomy, linguistics and child development interesting topics to examine in depth and learn more about, I could not see myself entering the speech pathology career path. I went into the healthcare field because I could only see myself pursuing a future career that resulted in my expertise benefitting someone else's life. However, I also knew that I was results-oriented; ever since I was a child I always wanted to put the whole puzzle together and see the fixed, final result. I wanted to find a field where I could help a patient and their life would be improved once they left my office and went out into the world again. As my studies continued, I found myself unsure of the path I had chosen, but determined to not give up on my dream of becoming a healthcare professional.

My sophomore year was a difficult one due to the terrible shooting that occurred in my hometown of Sandy Hook, Connecticut. My studies in speech and hearing science came to a halt as I began the process of transferring to a school closer to home and my family. Eventually, I succeeded in transferring to your university, after a semester as a part-time un-matriculated student at a nearby university. It was at this point that I finally had the experience of observing audiology appointments for the first time in March of 2014. I had finally found the more factual field I was looking for, and as I conducted further research comparing the two fields, it became obvious that the route of audiology was what would give me the most satisfaction in a career. From that point on, I knew I wanted to become a practicing audiologist and I was driven to gain as much experience as I could before applying to graduate school.

One of my most significant experiences I have had in this past year was shadowing an audiologist this past summer at her private practice in Sandy Hook, Connecticut. Her advice and stories of her experiences of being an audiologist in the past 20 years made me even more inspired by this field. While shadowing her, I was able to interact with her patients and have hands-on experience with programming hearing aids, and learn about the

manufacturers and the dynamics behind the hearing aid industry. I was also able to have the experience of meeting with an Oticon representative, who came to the audiologist's office to discuss some of the new products that were introduced at the past year's AudiologyNOW! conference. The technology is constantly being improved in order to provide the best for patients and I look forward to learning and being a part of this evolution.

Other great experiences I have had also include taking an Introduction to Audiology course this past fall semester. Since the teacher is a graduate student herself, her advice was invaluable since she just went through the experience of applying to audiology programs as well. I spent many of her office hours just talking about what we were learning in class and what it is like to be a graduate student at your university. Given her fantastic reviews of the program and the faculty, I realized how great of a decision it was to transfer to your university's Speech, Language and Hearing Science program as an undergraduate. While December 14, 2012 was a horrible day that will never be forgotten, it led me on the right direction to a university that I'm proud to be at today.

In addition to doing many inspiring community service projects with different adolescent, aging and disabled populations and performing well academically, I have also had the ability to become involved in research. During my undergraduate time at your university, I helped to test and collect data on mice with a gene mutation and measured their anxiety response to a noise stimulus with my professor for my Biopsychology class. This past fall semester I assisted a faculty member with editing a publication that will be featured in the sixth edition of *The Noise Manual*. This book is significant for professionals in the hearing conservation industry and will be read by thousands of people in the field once published later this year. I will be continuing to work with her this spring semester in her lab by assisting graduate students with their Capstone projects and research interests. Both of these research experiences have given me the opportunity to work with distinguished professors and further propelled me to pursue higher education in audiology and continue conducting research in the field.

I want to stay at your university because I feel like I've only just started my education here. Once I graduate, I will only have 3 semesters under my belt, and I'm not ready to leave this incredible university. The research opportunities in the audiology field are numerous, and after discussing your doctorate program with other AuD students in the Student Academy of Audiology, I can see myself excelling here. All of the faculty members that I've met so far are approachable and to have the opportunity to collaborate with them would be an invaluable experience in my graduate education. I would be incredibly grateful and appreciative of the opportunity to become an AuD student here, and to finally have the opportunity to be on the other side of that glass window.