

## Example 9 (2016)

In my first semester at the *Name of University*, I took an introductory social work class titled: “Making a Difference: Professions that Change the World”. At the time, I was earnestly seeking a career that would fit the lofty goal of “changing the world”. Throughout the semester, I heard story after story about researchers, doctors, and activists who were saving lives on a global scale, but I still had not found a career path that reflected how I wanted to serve others. It was not until we began to talk about professions oriented towards day-to-day service, intervention, and care that I realized my grand scale way of thinking had actually been limiting my perspective. The people who truly form relationships and make an impact on others more often work on the foundations—things like preventative medicine, social services, and early intervention and education—that contribute to happy and healthy communities. That foundational impact is what I want to be a part of as an audiologist; and my learning in the classroom, volunteering in the community, and working as an information guide on campus have shown me the importance of skills like creating individualized approaches, communicating effectively, and problem solving collaboratively that are crucial to being an impactful student and audiologist in the future.

As a student studying communication sciences and disorders within the School of Education, I have had the opportunity to see the many connections between educational strategies and services for students with disabilities like hearing impairments. In my classes, I have not only learned a great deal about the psychology behind teaching and the learning process, but I have also been exposed to different ways of adapting therapy methods and instruction when the original plan falls short. This idea of adapting methods and plans is particularly applicable when advising individuals and families on the best way to treat hearing loss and balance disorders. Because of the incredible variety of technologies and communication modalities that exist, I recognize the importance of being flexible and creative when devising treatment and management plans that tailor to the individual. In terms of both communication and educational needs, one size does not fit all, and effective plans must be as diverse as the people they serve.

Volunteering on campus and in the larger *Name of City* community has been especially formative because it allows me to apply what I have learned in class in dynamic and tangible ways. I have been especially fortunate to spend time working with adults with disabilities on campus through an adapted fitness program, as well as in the community at *Name of Health Center*. Though clients had different goals and challenges in each setting, being able to listen carefully and build strong relationships on which to communicate was a common thread in serving them effectively. The importance of effective communication has become especially salient for me while volunteering at *Name of Health Center*. There I spend time with older adults with hearing loss and dementia, as well as others with disabilities that require the use of augmentative and alternative communication devices. This was my first experience with truly challenging communication interactions, and it has really impressed upon me the benefits, but also limitations, that come from assistive technologies. Technology is an asset

that can be chosen and adapted to serve a person's unique communication needs, but assistive technologies of any type can fail, and I have learned the importance of adapting to the situation, as well as being a patient and flexible partner in making sure clients' voices are heard.

On campus, I work as an information guide supervisor, where my job involves communicating through a lot of different modalities—over the phone, through email, and in-person—all while being a resource for the other guides and providing accurate information to community members. The environment is fast-paced, and each day I am presented with new and challenging situations that often require welcoming the perspectives and expertise of my fellow guides in order to serve students and visitors more effectively. This type of teamwork is similar to being part of a multidisciplinary team in clinical and educational settings, where a joint effort is often crucial to sifting through research evidence and treatment options in order to find the right fit. At work, I must be able to adapt the way I convey information based on the medium and context of the exchange. Being receptive to new suggestions and methods has allowed me to become a more able communicator in diverse situations.

I want to be a successful communicator, student, and clinician in a variety of settings, and the clinical AuD program at [insert university] will give me the opportunity to learn and collaborate with others both in the classroom and out. I appreciate how the courses and variety of clinical settings at the university provide the experience of combining scientific and theoretical foundations for practice with an emphasis on the value of counseling and advocating for individuals based on their unique needs. As a student drawn to the field of educational audiology, I look forward to being able to combine scientific evidence with human interaction in order to provide the best interventions for people with hearing loss.