

## SAMPLE UNIQUE CHARACTERISTICS SECTION:

I am pleased to offer this Medical Student Performance Evaluation for José Bruin as a candidate for your post-graduate training program. José was born and raised in California, to a registered nurse mother and a small-business owner father. Both of his parents immigrated to the United States in pursuit of a higher education, and the family struggled at first with limited finances and daunting cultural and language barriers. José cites his parents for instilling in him the values of a tireless work ethic, a devotion to family, and an understanding of the value of a good education.

José spent his formative years in South Los Angeles, California, where he flourished, quickly moving to the top of his class and graduating as Valedictorian. He realized at a young age that he had a knack for the sciences, leading him to found the “Biology Society” at his school. He was also President of the Math Council, Vice-President of the Community Service Club, and the Captain of the varsity soccer team.

José attended the University of California, Los Angeles, where he majored in Bioengineering and graduated *magna cum laude*. He served as president of the Premedical Student Group, and he was a member of the Golden Key Honors Society. He was the recipient of numerous scholarships, including a summer research grant that allowed him to conduct a study in UCLA’s Department of Neurobiology. This work resulted in a presentation at the UCLA Undergraduate Research Symposium. He also devoted himself to his community, mentoring and tutoring underserved 4th and 5th graders at his old middle school.

While in medical school, José has continued to distinguish himself as a leader, be it academically, within the community, or in the world of research. He has been the coordinator for the Family Medicine Interest Group, has served as Vice-President of the school’s AMSA chapter, and has volunteered his time to the Mobile Clinic and the Synergy Health Fair. He has also continued to explore his interest in research, and his work studying the reconstitution of cryo-preserved human embryos has resulted in a first-author publication in a peer-reviewed journal. Additionally, he has traveled with LIGA to rural Mexico, bringing health care to the underserved. José has received a Letter of Distinction in Family Medicine which, in a pass/fail system, is our way of acknowledging a truly extraordinary performance on the required clinical clerkships.

**\*\* You will now draft your own personalized Unique Characteristics section, which you will submit online in February, along with your MSPE Questionnaire. This exercise is designed to help you pinpoint your strengths and the areas in your history that make you stand out as a candidate. Please closely follow the guidelines on the next page outlining how to structure your Unique Characteristics section. Also, remember to only include information that you would want your interviewers to read in your MSPE! \*\***

## **UNIQUE CHARACTERISTICS SECTION: STUDENT DRAFT (Due February 28, 2009)**

### ***DO include:***

- *Pertinent and defining information that sets you apart from your competition*
- *4 paragraphs (Background, High School, College, Medical School)*
- *2000 words or less (You want to present yourself as succinctly and eloquently as possible)*

### ***DO NOT include:***

- *Anything irrelevant or that you cannot talk about extensively in an interview setting*
- *Political or religious identifiers*
- *Information that is too personal or too emotional to be discussed extensively in an interview*

### **Paragraph 1 (Background/Childhood):**

- Where were you born and raised?
- What do/did your parents do for work?
- What significant influences or obstacles did you or your family encounter during your childhood?

### **Paragraph 2 (High School):**

- Where did you attend high school?
- Briefly describe significant accomplishment(s), if any, in the following categories:
  - Academics (Valedictorian or honors/awards)
  - Leadership (Class President, team captain)
  - Community service/Religious/Athletics (describe only what you can, and would want to, talk about extensively in an interview)
- Briefly describe influences or obstacles you encountered during high school, if any (ex: death of a parent, learning disability, language/cultural/socio-economic barriers, etc.)

### **Paragraph 3 (College):**

- Where did you attend college?
- What was your major? What was your minor (if any)?
- Briefly describe significant accomplishment(s), if any, in the following categories:
  - Academics (Phi Beta Kappa, *magna cum laude*, etc.)
  - Leadership (Class President, Founder of organization, etc.)
  - Community service/Religious/Athletics (describe only what you can, and would want to, talk about extensively in an interview)
  - Research, specifically if it pertains to medicine
- Briefly describe influences or obstacles you encountered during college, if any (ex: death of a parent, learning disability, language/cultural/socio-economic barriers, etc.)

### **Paragraph 4 (Medical School):**

- If dual degree, please describe (MBA, MPH, MSTP)
- Briefly describe any significant accomplishments in the following categories:
  - Academics (Letters of Distinction)
  - Leadership (Class Officer, Interest Group Coordinator, etc.)
  - Extracurricular activities related to career choice (Interest Groups, Student Orgs, etc.)
  - Community service/Religious/Athletics (describe only what you can, and would want to, talk about extensively in an interview)
  - Research, if any.
- Briefly describe influences or obstacles you encountered during medical school, if any.