Personal Statement

Driven by a profound commitment to advancing public health research with the overarching goal of maximizing human well-being while minimizing suffering, my life's mission and passion are to make a meaningful impact on the world through rigorous scientific inquiry. My primary focus is on contributing to research in the realm of public health through biostatistics.

My statistics and research methodology experience in psychology, coupled with the deep understanding of biological concepts that my biology degree and chemistry coursework give me, position me to excel in this program and contribute significantly to the success of future public health research as a Biostatistician. With three years of research experience, including two years of data management and analysis, combined with my majors in Psychology, Biology, and a minor in chemistry (Summa Cum Laude), I believe I possess a unique blend of skills that will make me an exceptional student at the Colorado School of Public Health. Having been accepted into the Certificate in Health Analytics and Data Science for Spring 2024, my aspiration is to commence the Master of Public Health in Applied Biostatistics in the Fall, and culminate in my graduation with both the MPH and data science certificate, and be poised as an outstanding candidate to begin my career as a Biostatistician.

My educational background in Psychology (B.A.) and Biology (B.S.) has provided extensive hands-on experience and engendered in me a deep love for research. Throughout my academic journey, I assumed leadership as the President of the MSU Denver Psychology Research Club, co-authored 16 studies presented at conferences spanning topics such as stress, depression, mindfulness, anxiety, and adverse childhood experiences, and worked as a Research Assistant for multiple professors. Data analysis emerged as a core competence and passion, with me taking the lead in analyzing data for all seven of our research projects during my tenure as the club's President. The following year, I transitioned to a mentorship role, analyzing data and writing results sections for eight research projects. My involvement also extended to a Research Assistant position, where I undertook physiological data analysis and identified a novel study. Notably, I presented a poster at the largest Psychology conference in the nation (APA) as an undergrad, and received recognition with awards, including two Outstanding Empirical Research Awards at a regional conference, as well as the Outstanding Student Researcher and Promising Teacher Awards from my department. In addition, my education has positioned me to meet the preferred qualifications for the MPH in Applied Biostatistics. In particular, I completed two college level math courses through College Algebra and College Trigonometry and have taken multiple statistics courses including Advanced Statistics: SPSS. Since then, I have continued my education in statistics through self-study, attending online data analysis events with the Center for Innovative Design and Analysis at Anschutz, reading books on Data Science and Machine Learning, and most recently completing online courses in Python and R. My research skills have continued to grow during my tenure as a Professional Research Assistant at CU Anschutz, where I’ve contributed significantly to my teams’ achievements, including supporting my PIs in securing a $250,000 grant checkpoint, generating key data for a forthcoming publication, performing a comprehensive literature review and an accompanying write-up in support of an interview for my PI, co-authoring on four additional posters presented locally, and playing a significant role in acquiring key data for my current project.

Throughout these many years in research, I have contemplated deeply on how I can best serve society and find a profound sense of fulfillment in my professional career; how can I do the most good for the most people, while engaging in something I enjoy and which will provide me with a deep sense of meaning and satisfaction? I have homed in on one key answer: Biostatistics. This field is the perfect marriage between my Psychology and Biology degrees. Combine this with the statistical reasoning and inquiry that I already know I love, while empowering me to address a spectrum of health issues encompassing cancer, Alzheimer’s, and mental health, and I know that I have found my calling. I also just finished the Applied Biostatistics I course, and not only did I feel at home being back in the classroom, but I was thoroughly engaged in the material and homework and am eager to begin more advanced classes.

In pursuit of my aspiration to become a Biostatistician, I have sought counsel from Bailey Fosdick, the program advisor, and have selected as many statistics courses as possible to prepare me for a fulfilling career in biostatistics. One of the program's notable strengths lies in its inclusion of practicum and capstone projects, which afford students immersive, hands-on experience in real-world public health challenges. This practical orientation, coupled with the academic rigor of the program, aligns seamlessly with my professional objectives.

Furthermore, I hold the Colorado School of Public Health in high esteem, given its recent ranking as the 17th out of 206 Master’s in Public Health programs nationwide, with the biostatistics program being ranked 15th. The prospect of being part of such a distinguished institution is both an honor and a privilege. The curriculum's strategic focus on preparing graduates for the workforce and equipping them with advanced skills in data analysis including clinical research informatics, clinical trial design, longitudinal and survival analysis, statistical consulting, and proficiency in SAS and R, is particularly appealing.

For these compelling reasons, I have chosen the Applied Biostatistics program at the Colorado School of Public Health as my ideal academic destination. I firmly believe that my skillset is the perfect fit for this program and will allow me to excel in my coursework and emerge with knowledge and skills that will extend beyond the classroom and find application in my future career. I look forward to refining my research and data analysis capabilities, and am excited at the prospect of beginning my journey as a master’s student at the Colorado School of Public Health.

With gratitude,

Sean Vieau