**Brag Sheet**

Ashley Helfinstein

**General Information**

*Name:*

Ashley Helfinstein

*Student ID:*

5122692

*Gender:*

Female

*Ethnicity:*

Caucasian

*Cell Phone Number:*

(408) 306-6054

*College Email Address:*

[a-college@helfinstein.com](mailto:a-college@helfinstein.com)

*Mother Name:*

Ruth Helfinstein

*Mother Email Address:*

[hhs@helfinstein.com](mailto:hhs@helfinstein.com)

*Father Name:*

David Helfinstein

*Academic GPA 10-12:*

4.0

**Testing Information**

*SAT Reasoning Score:*

2190

*SAT Subject Scores:*

Math 2-800

Spanish-730

Physics-640

*AP Scores:*

Calc BC-5

Physics C Mechanics-5

**School Information**

*What are your favorite subjects in school and why?*

Physics because I enjoyed the challenge it offered me, as well as the cool application of math in the real world. Calculus was a favorite for similar reasons, because it was very rewarding to reach an answer in hard problems, and understand concepts. I also loved Spanish because I like speaking in another language and I think linguistics is very interesting.

*Which school activities (non-athletic) have you participated in and enjoyed?*

I love being in Book Club, and discussing interesting books with other avid readers. I also enjoy being in Life in Focus Photography Club because I enjoy taking pictures and sharing them with others, as well as seeing the amazing work that other members put forth. I also participate in CSF because it is rewarding to volunteer with the community.

*Did you have a significant role or leadership position in those activities?*

I am the co-founder/president of Book Club, which started at the beginning of 2014-15 school year. This year I am the Director of Operations (secretary/treasurer) of Life In Focus.

*Which sports have you played (including out-of-school)?*

Homestead JV Volleyball-2 years

Homestead Varsity Volleyball-2 years

Homestead JV Swim Team-3 years

Mountain View Volleyball Club 16 Black 2014

Mountain View Volleyball Club 17 Black 2015

*Other out-of-school activities?*

Performances:

Merry Christmas, Strega Nona-PYT Stories on Stage-2013 (10th Grade): Played Strega Nona

Legally Blonde-PYT Mainstage Musical-2013 (Summer after 9th Grade): Played Assistant DA, ensemble

A Little House Christmas-PYT Stories on Stage-2012 (9th Grade): Played Ma

Summer Programs:

Maccabi Games-Volleyball-2014

UC San Diego Academic Connections-Cognitive Science-2015

*Work experience (paid or volunteer)? Significant or special travel experience?*

Madricha (Teaching Assistant) for 6th grade class at Congregation Etz Chayim for Hebrew/Jewish Studies (volunteer)-2012

Maccabi Games-Summer 2014-Boca Raton, Florida-Volleyball: A week-long athletic competition set up like the Olympics with delegations from different JCCs (Jewish Community Centers) around the country and from other countries including Israel and Mexico. Athletes stay with host families from the community and compete against other teams in tournament play. There is also a volunteer aspect and many planned activities. I stayed with a host family who I did not know previously, and got to know them as well as my roommate from another sport. It was my first time away from home for a summer program without knowing anyone previously, and I learned a lot and met a lot of people from different places.

*Have you earned any awards or honors?*

2015-Grade 11-Green and White Award for Photography class from Mr. Kwong

2015-Grade 11-Green and White Award for AP Calculus BC class from Mr. Burroughs (only award given from this teacher for AP Calculus in the school year)

2015-Grade 11-William Shakespeare Green and White Award for excellent writing and work in American Literature Honors class from Mrs. Gunderson

2014-Grade 10-Green and White Award for Spanish 3 class from Señora Tarkington

2014-Grade 10-Green and White Award for Physics Honors class from Mrs. Fackrell

2014-Grade 10-Zora Neale Hurston Green and White award for a good attitude and work ethic in World Literature/Writing class from Mr. Yoshida

2013-Grade 9-Green and White Award for PE class from Mrs. Nakamatsu

2014-Grade 10-Most Improved swimmer on the JV Swim Team

2012-Grade 9-Most Improved volleyball player on the JV volleyball team

*Do you have any hobbies, special interests or special talents not mentioned above?*

Juggling, reading, writing in cursive.

**College Plans**

*Please list the public and private colleges/universities that you will be applying to.*

Stanford University, Pomona College, UC San Diego, UCLA, UC Santa Barbara, Yale, Macalester College, UC Irvine, Cal Poly San Luis Obispo

*For each of the schools listed, please indicate the average GPA and test scores for admissions.*

Stanford: GPA: 3.83, Combined SAT scores: 2182

Pomona: GPA: 3.94, SAT: 2305

UCSD: GPA: 3.88, SAT: 2157

UCLA: GPA: 3.92, SAT: 2209

UCSB: GPA: 3.79, SAT: 2073

Yale: GPA: 3.96, SAT: 2240

Macalester: GPA: 3.84, SAT: 2134

UCI: GPA: 3.82, SAT: 2082

Cal Poly SLO: GPA: 3.74, SAT: 2030

*Do you plan to visit these universities?*

No. I have already visited some, and the ones I haven’t I do not plan to until after I hear back.

*Which college is your first choice and why?*

Stanford because it is an excellent school, my mom went there and I really like the community. Also there are a great variety of majors and programs, which I require because I do not know yet what I want to major in.

*Is your parent alumni to this university?*

Yes.

*Are you interested in majoring in any of the following?*

(Art, Engineering, Drama, English, Pre-professional)

No.

*What do you want to major in?*

I don’t know yet.

*Why do you want to go to college?*

I enjoy learning and I want to continue to learn new things at a higher level and figure out what to do with the rest of my life and be prepared for it.

*Describe your educational goals and possible careers you envision for yourself.*

My goals are to try learning new topics and to extend my knowledge of other topics so I can be a well-rounded member of society. I do not know what career I envision for myself.

*Will you consider to apply?*

(Early Decision, Single Choice Early Action, Early Action, Regular Decision)

Single Choice Early Action and Regular Decision

*Is the location of the college important?*

Yes.

*Do you want to*

(Stay in California, Go out of state, Does not matter)

Does not matter

*Should the campus be in a*

(Large city, Rural surroundings, Does not matter)

Does not matter

*Is a study abroad program important to you?*

No

*Is financial aid important to you?*

No

*Will you consider submitting a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), Cal Grant GPA Verification Form, or CSS Profile to be eligible for financial aid or scholarships?*

Yes

*Are you the first one in your family to go to post-secondary education?*

No

**About Me**

*List your three most distinguishing, most admirable qualities. Think about those aspects of yourself you would like your recommendation writer to stress.*

My most distinguishing qualities are my positivity, work ethic and empathy. I always try to be positive about situations, turning my emotions around if I begin to worry or become overwhelmed. I like to bring the positive energy to other people as well, for example in my table groups in school, my sports teams and my friends. When someone I know is worried I attempt to cheer him or her up with positive energy and bring him or her to an optimistic viewpoint.

I feel an internal drive to do well, and it bothers me if I do not do my work to satisfy my standards. I also love to learn, and am genuinely interested in many of the topics that I learn about. This, in addition to my work ethic, causes me to feel the need to complete my work well and on time in school and in other aspects of my life. I want to know and understand the topics and do my best work for the best learning. I follow through when I have made a commitment for something. As president of Book Club, I make sure to turn in announcements on time and keep up with emails to my fellow officers and the other members. In school, I do my work thoroughly and on time even though I have many other time commitments.

I am empathetic, and sensitive to the feelings and situations of others. When other people are upset, I often notice and feel distressed for them, so I attempt to alleviate their stress or sadness and help them whatever way I can. In project groups I tend to be understanding of the busy schedules of others as well as the additional pressures that people are under, so I compromise and help the group to work together and complete a good project. I try to cause harmony and happiness in the people around me. I care about their feelings.

*List your personality weakness.*

I do not like conflict, so I do not confront people very often. This can help make groups and activities run smoothly and be more pleasant, but this could negatively affect the outcome. If a certain problem is not addressed, it could be detrimental. I am working on determining times that confrontation could be helpful, and taking action in those situations. The confrontation does not even have to be combative, but just addressing a controversial issue that bothers me. An example of this is when I talked to my club volleyball coach about what I could do better to receive more playing time in games. This was very uncomfortable and stressful for me to do, because I did not want to confront my coach, but it resulted in some helpful advice and eventually more playing time.

*Is your high school record an accurate measure of your ability and potential?*

My high school record does well to demonstrate how hard I have worked throughout my high school career. It shows the way that I have excelled in my classes so far. I'm sure I have greater ability than just the ability to get good grades, such as the ability to actually learn a topic, enjoy it and apply it. This may not be demonstrated solely by grades, but more by the description of my teachers and myself about my classes.

*What circumstances, if any, have interfered with your academic performance?*

No circumstances have really interfered with my academic performance so far.

*Please describe the single academic accomplishment of which you are most proud and explain why you take special pride in it.*

I am proud of myself for improvement. I am proud of the growth that I had in AP Calculus last year. There were certain points during the year that I struggled with the material, for example during the Polar graphing unit. There were some quizzes and tests on which I did not do as well as I would have liked. Afterword, I worked hard to learn from my mistakes and understand the material, and when I reached the final I did a lot better on those topics, as well as other ones from before. I was very proud that I was able to master the concepts, even those that were difficult for me at first, and prove that I had really learned a lot in the class. Whenever I am able to see myself improve I feel joyful.

*What points or qualities would you like to be included in your letter of recommendation?*

Qualities I want included in my letter of recommendation are: my volleyball skills, my hard work and improvement (also shown by the fact that I got most improved in both volleyball and swimming), my love of learning, my work ethic, and my positivity and kindness.

*Have you had any especially stimulating intellectual experience in recent years?*

When I took AP Physics last year, it was an especially stimulating experience for me. It was a huge jump from the difficulty level of Physics Honors and it took me a while to adjust. In addition, the tests had such tight time restraints that I was often unable to finish, and I did not think about choosing which problems I could solve the fastest. I was worried that I would not be able to ever understand that level of material and succeed in the class. Then, I adjusted by looking at the "Pretty Problems" that explained homework problems I did not understand, I looked up videos online to explain concepts that I struggled with, and I went in to tutorial to get help. I practiced my composure and test-taking skills so that I could show the maximum level of my ability on a test and not be fazed by the time limits. I adjusted to the level of learning and was able to become ready to learn in a challenging, college-level course. After that I reveled in the experience of learning fascinating new topics that were very relevant to real life, while still involving a lot of math, which I liked. This was a remarkable experience for me because I learned to take things in stride and be willing to work hard, and maybe even fail from time to time, and keep learning. I decided that instead of stressing about the result, I needed to focus on learning the most that I could.

*Have any summer activities, work or study been of significant experience to you?*

The summer before my senior year, I attended a summer program at UC San Diego called Academic Connections. It was a significant learning experience, as well as an experience with independent life. I was taught by two really smart graduate students about Cognitive Science, an interdisciplinary field about the study of the mind. In three weeks we covered many fascinating topics such as psychology, philosophy, neuroscience, linguistics, anthropology, computer science and artificial intelligence, as well as many more. The learning extended outside of class for me, and I found myself pondering the questions and information brought up in class during other activities. The mind is so applicable to everything we do, that I could help but notice the topics we talked about in reality and compare. I was excited whenever I found a connection, and so were my classmates. We could talk about it any time at a high level. This experience made me exciting for the conversations and learning ahead of me in college. In addition, this was my first major experience with living away from home and being truly independent. I was scared before I went, but after I arrived I learned that I had the ability to manage myself and adjust to a new situation. I got to feel at home in the dorms with my suite mates and eating in the dining halls. Overall, it greatly increased my feeling of readiness and desire to go to college. It was a college-level class for which I got credit and an A+. I feel that I have the ability to thrive in college and that I will fit in well there. This summer has made me excited for what's to come, in addition to being one of the best summers I have ever had.

*If you could spend a day doing whatever you wanted, whatever the cost, what would you like to do?*

I would like to ride on an airplane (in first class) to Spain so I could experience the culture there and practice my Spanish skills. I would go with many of my friends and we would play volleyball there because I think it would be fun and interesting to experience volleyball in such a new environment. I would go to a theatre and to a restaurant and experience these different aspects. Then I would fly on an airplane back because I like to travel and I enjoy riding on airplanes.

*Is there any other information you would like to share so that your recommendation writer can make an accurate appraisal of you to colleges and universities?*

I have many deep interests, and I enjoy many subjects in school, which has made it difficult for me to decide what I should do for my major. In college I want to learn about many different things before I make my final decision.