Dear Committee Member,

My interest in statistics stems from the propositions that (a) the world is full of uncertainty and (b) uncertainty can be understood through statistical analysis.

I come to statistics as an independently-minded sort of individual. As Woody Allen observed, "I wouldn't want to be a part of any club that would have me as a member."

I feel like I've finally found my club. I carry around my ASA card in my wallet. I read *Chance* magazine with a calculator in hand. I consider waiting in line to be fieldwork.

Like some of my fellow students, I'm already well into my career. I do statistics at work and share the results with my colleagues. I'm just going to keep doing it and see what happens.

I can't predict where my life and career will take me next. But I will place a bet- *I'm long on tech.* In other words, I believe that we are still climbing the upward curve in data, computation and hardware. To quote William Gibson, "The future is already here- it's just not very evenly distributed."

Speaking of distributions, I'm no mathematics savant- I like to joke that I approach statistics like an English major. To that end, learning to model stochastic processes has been a vital pillar in understanding many statistical problems. I'm willing to embrace my ability to *communicate* the methods and results of statistical analysis better than most (in my native language, of course).

Finally, I've come to understand that the landscape of statistics is broad and the questions are many. I can't learn it all, but after a year and a half in the statistics graduate program, I've built the foundation and confidence to keep learning. Thank you.

Blake Shurtz