

## Statement of Purpose

The Richard & Rhoda Goldman School of Public Policy welcomes applicants from a wide variety of backgrounds and with a variety of career aspirations. Some of our students have had prior experience in the realm of public policy; others have not. It is helpful to us to know more about your background, your motivation, and your long-term goals than can be inferred from your records and references. We would appreciate your helping us by supplying a brief statement of 3-5 pages, double-spaced. Please address some of these areas:

The present: Why do you want to take an educational program in the analysis and management of public policy?

The past: What experiences or activities bear on your qualifications for this program, e.g., research papers, study groups, job responsibilities, policy or political projects? How do these experiences relate to your decision to undertake the study of public policy analysis and management? If you have been out of school for a year or more, please indicate the positions you have held and your major activities. A vita or resume is strongly recommended.

The future: What kinds of work and activity would you like to engage in following graduation, and what are your long-range career objectives?

Please supply whatever information you think may help us to understand your candidacy more fully.

## Analytic Essay

It helps the Admissions Committee to understand how you approach problems. Using any one of the following paragraphs, please prepare a brief essay. Assume that you work within an organization to which one of these six suggestions has been made. The person for whom you work has asked for advice on two questions: (1) What are the most important considerations in approaching this issue? and (2) If you had two or three uninterrupted days to explore this issue in greater depth, what would you do? You are not expected to have more than general knowledge of the policy area on which you comment, nor to utilize the tools (or jargon) of any particular academic discipline. The questions contain no “tricks.” You are simply asked to bring good sense to bear and to get a fairly quick response back to the person who has asked for the advice. Your essay should be clear and concise and **should not exceed 750 words.**

1. Reduced capital gains tax rates would spur investment and boost the economy. A more productive economy means greater wealth all around and, even more importantly, a supply of employment opportunities. Unfortunately, the distributional effects of reduced capital gains tax rates favor the better off, and the politics of class envy prevent adoption of a policy that would benefit the whole society.
2. There is no solid waste disposal problem in most parts of the country. One calculation shows that, at current rates of waste generation, we could store all the country's waste for the next 1,000 years in a hole 100 yards deep and 30 miles square. In any case, since household waste accounts for only about four percent of the entire waste stream, the best that can be said about curbside recycling programs is that they are consciousness-raising—although one must still wonder to what end consciousness is being raised.
3. Giving families vouchers that would allow them to send their children to any elementary or secondary school, including private religious schools, is an experiment that clearly ought to be tried. We might discover that marketplace competition could indeed stimulate improved performance by participating schools and that parents are no worse at making educational decisions for their children than they are at all the other, even more consequential, decisions they make. We might also discover that segregation by race, religion, and ideology increased to an unacceptable degree.
4. Who could disagree that banning handguns would reduce the rate of murders and of accidental fatalities and injuries? The question in dispute is by how much. What, for instance, will happen to the 100 million or so handguns in circulation right now? Eliminate 50 million and there are still 50 million left. Eliminate 90 million and the remaining 10 million may still do quite a lot of damage if they migrate to the wrong hands—as they surely would.
5. Drinking water is essential to health and economic development and hence is almost always provided by governments. Lately, however, the government monopoly on the distribution of drinking water is being challenged around the world. Surely governments can not be so inefficient and so corrupt so often that in the future we should assume that as a general rule drinking water is to be supplied by regulated private monopolies.
6. Airport security methods inevitably trade off higher degrees of security against lower degrees of convenience. The Wannawanna Airport Authority is therefore trying to decide whether to use a profiling system. When profiling is used, whether ethnic or otherwise, the issue of “fairness” also becomes a factor. When profiling isn't used, “fairness” is still a factor since random checks impose “hassle” costs on many people who present little to any threat (e.g. frail elders).