**Writing a Personal Statement about Your Future**

**2016-2017**

*“Your personal statement should be exactly that — personal. This is your opportunity to tell us about yourself — your hopes, ambitions, life experiences and inspirations. Be open. Be reflective. Find your individual voice and express it honestly.”* –University of California [#1-8 select four, 350 word max on each]

*“The essay demonstrates your ability to write clearly and concisely on a selected topic and helps you distinguish yourself in your own voice. What do you want the readers of your application to know about you apart from courses, grades, and test scores?”* –The Common Application [\*#9-13 write one essay, 650 word max]

**Questions to Consider:**

1. Describe an example of your leadership experience in which you have positively influenced others, helped resolve disputes, or contributed to group efforts over time.

2. Every person has a creative side, and it can be expressed in many ways: problem solving, original and innovative thinking, and artistically, to name a few. Describe how you express your creative side.

3. What would you say is your greatest talent or skill? How have you developed and demonstrated that talent over time?

4. Describe how you have taken advantage of a significant educational opportunity or worked to overcome an educational barrier you have faced.

5. Describe the most significant challenge you have faced and the steps you have taken to overcome this challenge. How has this challenge affected your academic achievement?

6. Describe your favorite academic subject and explain how it has influenced you.

7. What have you done to make your school or your community a better place?

8. What is the one thing that you think sets you apart from other candidates applying to your college?

\*9. How has something in your life–your background, your identity, an interest or talent–become so meaningful to you that your life story up to this point would be incomplete without it?

\*10. How has an incident or time when you experienced failure affected you, and what did you learn from the experience?

\*11. If you have ever challenged a belief or idea, what prompted you to act and would you make the same decision again?

\*12. If you have ever solved a problem, or discovered a problem you would like to solve–an intellectual challenge, a research query, an ethical dilemma, anything of personal importance no matter the size–what was its significance to you and what steps did you take (or would like to take) to identify a solution?

\*13. How did an accomplishment or event, formal or informal, mark your transition from childhood to adulthood within your culture, community, or family?