

Science  
Communication

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*UCSB Professional Writing Minor*

**APPLICATION FOR SCIENCE COMMUNICATION TRACK**

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Compiled by  
Kelsey McKeon Johnson  
Fall 2016

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## PREFATORY MATERIAL

## Personal Information and Academic Preparation

### PERSONAL INFORMATION

Name: Kelsey McKeon Johnson  
Local address: 6575 Del Playa Drive, Goleta, CA 93117  
Phone number: (415) 819-7939  
Primary e-mail: kelseyannmj@gmail.com

### ACADEMIC PREPARATION

Overall GPA: 2.83  
Major: Psychology  
Minor: pursuing minor in Professional Writing

### UPPER-DIVISION PRE-REQUISITES COMPLETED FOR MINOR

Course	Instructor	Grade
F15 WRIT 109SS (WRIT SOC SCIENCE)	Leslie Hammer	A-
S16 WRIT 105R (RHETORIC AND WRIT)	Kevin Moore	A

### UPPER-DIVISION PRE-REQUISITES IN PROGRESS FOR MINOR

Course	Instructor	Grade
F16 WRIT 107J (JOURNALISM AND NEWS WRITING)	Cindy Ross	

### WRITING CLASSES FOR WINTER/SPRING

Course	Instructor	Grade
W17 WRIT 159A (SPECIALIST SCIENTIFIC)	Karen Lunsford	
W17 WRIT 159B (NONSPECIALIST)	Karen Lunsford	

~ 18 UNITS PLANNED (INCLUDING WRITING COURSES) FOR WINTER AND 16 FOR SPRING ~

## Writing History

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It would be difficult as well as unsatisfactory to describe my history as a writer as adhering to a single category or style. I have been writing since my mother demanded me to write my first "Thank You" card in Kindergarten. She, undoubtedly, has played a part in my fascination with words and the skill of manipulating them to fit different roles. "Map out your future, but do it in pencil," Jon Bon Jovi once said, and my mom liked to remember the saying by traditionally hanging it on the refrigerator. I remember the day that the eight-year-old version of myself asked her what it meant and the days that followed when I had to remind myself of the profound meaning numerous times.

The years that followed marked my exploration with writing. Upon applying to high school, I submitted a short story to a school's scholar program, which I was accepted into with a monetary scholarship award. Its English classes that I enrolled in helped me find my voice as a writer as I was introduced to academic essays, poetry, and journalism. I handed down one of the poems from sophomore English class to Adda, my neighbor and family friend, whose husband had passed away only a few years prior, and, to this day, she tells me how touched she was to have had me both write the poem and pass it on to her.

The Professional Writing Minor program caught my attention freshman year at UCSB. I have been encouraged to apply by family, friends, and, most recently, employers from this past summer whose web content I managed. Writing for me is like working out a formula. The process is challenging, and the feeling I endure when I have reached a product is remarkable.



# Statement of Goals for Pursuing the Professional Writing Minor

My desire to join the Professional Writing Minor stems from a long personal appreciation of writing as a pursuit as well as a hobby. Since my childhood, I have time and time again been drawn to the idea of becoming a successful and inspirational news reporter, copywriter, or novelist. As a senior at the university, I have had three years and counting of undergraduate studies to help me arrive at the conclusion that I have a wide array of interests. Yet, I have also decided that whichever profession I enter I would like to also incorporate a writing facet into that particular area of study.

Adopting writing as more of a professional pursuit than simply a diversion requires that I be equipped with the proper education and training. The Professional Writing Minor program provides the resources necessary for me to refine my writing and successfully utilize ways to distribute it to a targeted audience. To this point, I have had experience in introductory writing classes and a job that necessitated an acceptable writing level, but this program would further allow me to benefit from instruction and employment designed specifically to prepare me for professional atmospheres. Because students apart of this program often acquire an internship, there would be numerous opportunities for me to firsthand observe workplaces that rely on exceptional writing.

I have recognized how much my writing has improved since taking my first writing class at the university. I have always been fascinated by the craft of writing and, therefore, had experienced most, if not all, of my error in embellishing too much. As the UCSB writing professors have already helped me tremendously, I am confident that this program would supplement the skills that I have attained thus far and enhance my assertiveness as a writer.

# Track Choices and Explanation

## DESIRED TRACK OF THE MINOR

First choice: Science Communication  
Second choice: Professional Editing  
Third choice: Multimedia Communication

## EXPLANATION OF TRACK CHOICES

This past summer, I came to the realization that I want to go into a health profession – more specifically, nursing. I spent thirty hours of the week working at a chiropractic clinic as an assistant and discovered how much I enjoyed applying knowledge to hands-on work with patients. Progressing toward completing my Psychology Major, I want to learn how to write for specialist scientific and nonspecialist audiences. I believe that collaboration between students of different majors in this program could produce scientific pieces that would appeal to a wide spectrum of audiences. This skill would be one that I would have to exercise in nursing, especially if I continue to pursue a specialty in nursing administration.

Essential to any corporation or organization is clear communication, both on a verbal and nonverbal front. If the Science Communication track had not been established, I would have referred to Professional Editing as my first preference. This track prepares students to enter into any writing domain, whether it requires a formal or casual presence. Multimedia Communication similarly is vital to the representation of any company and requires a creative outlet that I would find exciting and relevant to develop.

## RÉSUMÉ

## SUMMARY

Conscientious, organized, and broad-minded college student thriving in studies concerning major in Psychology and minor in Professional Writing and atmospheres necessitating exceptional communication. Experienced in independent and collaborative environments with all ages.

## EDUCATION

Present  
**Psychology**  
**University of California**  
**Santa Barbara**  
Santa Barbara, CA

## REFERENCES

**Dr. Adam Jacobs**  
SF Custom Chiropractic  
Head Clinician  
415-788-8700  
info@sfcustomchiro.com

**Michael Gould**  
Captain's Firehouse BBQ  
Manager  
805-259-6960

**Kristina Cano**  
Nordstrom  
Sales Manager  
408-930-3007

**Maeve Rossington**  
Babysitting Client  
415-902-9443  
meverossington@yahoo.com

**Katie Eller**  
Babysitting Client  
415-225-7438  
ellerjkt@yahoo.com

# KELSEY MCKEON JOHNSON

| 140 Park Street, San Francisco, CA 94110 | C: (415) 819-7939 |  
| kelseyannmj@gmail.com |

## EXPERIENCE

**Chiropractic Assistant** SF Custom Chiropractic San Francisco, CA  
06/2016-Present

- Open and close clinic, administer warm-up massages to patients, answer phones, oversee insurance inquiries, bill clients, book appointments, organize medical documents in office and on computer program, facilitate patient injury cases
- As employee in charge of social media, I post regularly on Facebook, Instagram, and the blog on our website. Professionalism expected with each written representation of the office. The owner and founder of SFCC has asked me to continue to contribute while away at school

**Assistant Manager, Food Handler/Server** Kaptain's Firehouse BBQ Goleta, CA  
10/2014-Present

- Punctuality, efficiency, and amiability expected when working in the restaurant and while representing the company
- Various functions necessitate including preparing food, serving customers, cleaning the kitchen, working the register, opening/closing the restaurant, and designing menus to display current and upcoming menus
- Create schedule, interview prospective employees, enforce policies, review staff

**Sales Associate** Nordstrom San Francisco, CA  
06/2013-09/2013

- Due to the long-held reputation of having excellent customer service, each and every experience of shoppers was expected to exceed minimum satisfaction
- Employing commission-based pay, the sales associate position had sales objectives unique to each department
- Having thorough knowledge of one's own department's products as well as other departments' merchandise was essential to meeting sales demands and customers' inquiries

**Tutor** San Francisco, CA  
11/2011-02/2012

- Through references from babysitting, a mother came into contact with me, wondering if I also would have an interest in tutoring her son in Pre-Algebra at a local San Francisco Public Library
- Tutoring took place every week for two hours and revolved around his and his mother's requests and objectives for the studying

**Babysitter** San Francisco, CA  
08/2007-09/2013

- Beginning in the seventh grade, families in my school community contacted me to babysit for them weekly
- Entering high school, I advertised my babysitting services seriously through references, online accounts on babysitting websites, and conversations with neighbors and friends
- Having babysat kids of all ages, and after earning my CPR certification multiple times throughout high school, families have regarded me as their top choice for babysitters



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| kelseyannmj@gmail.com |

## AWARDS/LEADERSHIP ACHIEVEMENT

### University of California, Santa Barbara Community *September 2015*

•Panhellenic at UCSB chose me as a member of the Greek community to lead as one of the Rho Gams for fall recruitment on campus. This entailed organizing the entire week along with collaborating with other Rho Gams to make the recruitment process as fluid as possible for members on both sides.

### Sacred Heart Cathedral Preparatory Athletic Association *October 2010*

•At the beginning of the varsity women's tennis team's season, my coach selected me to represent my teammates on the Athletic Leadership Council to offer suggestions for the tennis team as well as the sports program more generally. My contributions led to the addition of a third coach for the tennis team.

### High School Certificates/Honors

- DePaul Scholar Program *Aug 2009 - June 2013*
- Spanish 5,6 Honors Academic Award *May 2012*
- Chemistry 1,2 Academic Award *May 2011*

## VOLUNTEER SERVICE

- Students Promoting Awareness Raises Knowledge Club *Sep 2012 - Jun 2013*

- Cafeteria Server at Glide Memorial *Apr 2010 - Apr 2011*

## ATHLETIC ACCOMPLISHMENTS

### •Varsity Women's Tennis *Aug 2010 - Nov 2012*

*My coach elected me to represent the team on the Athletic Leadership Council in my school community, I received the titles of "Athlete of the Month" and "Most Valuable Player" for two consecutive seasons, I earned recognition from other coaches within my league with an "honorable Mention" all-league award, and I took the initiative to establish a strength-and-conditioning schedule in the off-season as well as during the season to strengthen my team's morale and aptitude.*

- Junior Varsity Track and Field *Feb 2011 - May 2011*

- Junior Varsity Women's Tennis *Aug 2009 - Nov 2009*

## WRITING SAMPLES

## Writing Sample 1 – Visual/Spatial Rhetorical Analysis

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During the first few meetings of Writing 105R (Rhetoric and Writing), my professor Kevin Moore drew my classmates' and my own attention to signs and spaces in our everyday environments and had us discuss their many possible interpretations. Following this activity, Professor Moore asked that we use three to four pages to describe a familiar object or place and arrive at a deeper meaning about it. My mind immediately diverted to locations in my hometown of San Francisco that screamed social and economic injustice. Initially, I thought of my main source of transportation growing up – MUNI, or Municipal Transportation Agency. In order to allow more readers to be able to connect to the piece, however, I chose to explore BART, or Bay Area Rapid Transit, as it crosses areas not limited to neighborhoods within San Francisco.

At our peer workshop, my classmates were impressed with the conclusion that I settled at from the inner workings of this particular transportation agency. I decided to challenge the fact of homeless individuals using BART stations to create sources of shelter. The ironic part to that reality stems from BART's function of transporting people from one location to another becoming distorted through the actions of homeless people. These disadvantaged men and women, instead of traveling to and fro, arrive at stations to perpetuate their state of immobility.

## BART Both as a Mobile and Stationary Unit

A tunnel some twenty feet high and wide marks the beginning of a journey into a seemingly empty abyss. The ground shakes, footsteps shuffle, and horns sound from the distance as if commotion develops from an endless catastrophe – affecting thousands of city goers every few minutes. Despite the roaring noises echoing through the station, people arrive, wait, and depart systemically just before leaving one reality and entering another in a fluid stream of men and women. Although the shuffle lasts only momentarily, its impact on the population is immeasurable; it serves as the link between the past and future, reflection and aspiration, and the familiar and unknown. While its most obvious function encompasses transferring groups of individuals from one location to the next as effortlessly and swiftly as possible, Bay Area Rapid Transport also inevitably provides an environment for some to, conversely, make precarious living arrangements. Distraught homeless folk claim that which travelers leave behind and create their best replica of a shelter. Sadly enough, the settlements go unnoticed by most due to the highly valued appeal of painless and quick travel via public transport services.

San Francisco necessitates a form of public transit in order to accommodate the near one million residents of the city, representing every socioeconomic, political, religious, and ethnic background. Bay Area Rapid Transit, established in the 1950s, transports individuals as far west as Daly City and as far east as Dublin/Pleasanton in a gray shuttle. Each bus wears a logo wielding the letters “b” and “a” and consists of blue wool seats that skillfully conceal specks of dirt. The small quarters bring people together from all walks of life that, perhaps, in any other circumstance, would not interact with each other. Pairs of seats comprise the sides of the train, separated only by an aisle, metal rails, and sliding doors. For the minutes or sometimes hours that passengers are onboard, their ears are filled by the sound of the train shrieking against the track. Due to limited access to outside communication with the utter lack of cell phone service, passengers are forced to endure every ounce of the experience with only those surrounding them. People read their newspapers to decompress, fan their faces with office paperwork because of the broken air conditioning unit, and sit restlessly and impatiently, darting their head back and forth from passenger to passenger. Beams of fluorescent light radiate on the carpet of the aisle in patterns, and the wide, paralleled windows reveal patches of sky that

instantaneously transform into pitch-black landscapes. It is only on the short train ride that riders are given the opportunity to communicate with their neighbors, and infrequently do they use it. These bus rides – although away from the traces of underprivileged, homeless people throughout BART stations – maintain hierarchies between people of different socioeconomic classes; the idea of fast, simple traveling, for the majority, excludes conversing with those thought to be not enduring the same reality and, therefore, less deserving of one's attention.

In underground BART trains, some potential for shared words, thoughts, and revelations exist. The stations, however, similar to those of other transit agencies, disinvite any delayed and inquisitive contemplation. Benches appear sparingly and only have a size large enough to fit ten eager transfer holders, at the most. They face the tracks from approximately ten feet away, and automated messages regarding shuttle arrival times flash on an electronic board hanging from the ceiling. After entering the station, it becomes evident that the experience within should play out as a passing one. With little options for seating, individuals can resort to perhaps buying a snack from the vending machine, which they can devour in minutes. Advertisements on the wall inform people how to expedite their travel and become concealed with a BART train's arrival – and ticket holders' speedy departure. Unlike the actual train's ability to provide the opportunity to sit down and relish in one's own or another's thoughts, the stations emphasize the need for speed in more than one aspect. Progression from one location to another cannot pause for retrospect or consideration of others because time likewise does not stop.

The qualities embodied by the BART institutions raise the question of whether the metro stations succeed more as a means of transportation or a haven for people who would otherwise live on the street. Perhaps, these terminals equally do both. The more significant issue, then, may concern bus riders' and the BART establishment's negligence regarding the growing number of homeless people setting up camp in stations and even trains. The paradox arises from the phenomenon of BART operating to move city residents around the Bay Area but ultimately serving as a place for not only people to come to in order to leave but also to arrive at and stay. Many do not realize the growing contradiction because of the business's accomplishment in making its function of

advancing travel most apparent. Even though riders come as close as walking inches away from a homeless person lying under a blanket on the hard ground, these men and women have come to the metro station to not get caught up in the idea of becoming stuck in one place. Society puts the ability to transcend a fleeting moment on a pedestal – leaving 21<sup>st</sup> century city goers urging to constantly be on the move. While the image of a homeless fixed in a state of affliction reminds others of not being able to advance forward, most people choose to disconnect themselves entirely from the reality by not recognizing, looking at, or helping a fellow human in need.

Society's limited resources continue to prevent countless individuals in every country from living to their fullest potential. Because time is one dimension that scientists have not come close to finding a way to warp to fit people's needs, societal institutions have attempted to produce more ways of making it seem progressively indefinite. Different enough from their primary purpose, these efforts have left underprivileged individuals in even more of a bind than before. BART proceeds in offering ways to transition its passengers from the present instant to a future time in a prompt manner but simultaneously – though not purposely – stresses the ignorance of those who cannot afford to do the same. The first step in resolving the predicament only requires taking a seat next to someone less fortunate and filling the potentially short BART train ride with attentive conversation. Although research proves time is one measurement that cannot be stretched, humans are capable of lengthening a moment by sharing it with those around them.

## Writing Sample 2 – Social Sciences Prospectus

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Writing 109SS (Writing for the Social Sciences) with Dr. Leslie Hammer offered a lot of room for trial and error. A large portion of the class was spent examining different social criticisms and then summarizing them. While completing these assignments, my class and I were also expected to consider topics for a final academic essay that would confront a realm of art and culture in society. After I turned in my prospectus outlining my argument and sources, Dr. Hammer consulted with me and explained her excitement for the piece. She commented on the maturity of the subject matter and even suggested that I revert back to the idea for a final dissertation. Although I had never written a paper over ten pages long, I took it in my hands to put my heart into explaining how rap and hip-hop genres have reinforced ethnic identities. The prospectus was the first phase in achieving this.



When considering the wide spectrum of contemporary American musicians belonging to innumerable racial, social, economic, and religious backgrounds, it becomes captivating to give thought to how critics of rap songs, at the time of their establishment, immediately categorized the genre as “the music of ‘urban communities’ and ‘black neighborhoods’ . . . [that] white readership would most likely encounter . . . as ‘intrusive noise’” (Kajikawa, 2015), in the words of *New York Times* journalists John Rockwell and Robert Palmer. This commentary – whether composed from these songs’ lyrics or their supporting beats – comprises one of many factors that produce stereotypes regarding both the listening to and the embodying of one genre of music over another. The act of personifying an idea portrayed through such an artistic style further encourages a particular formation of individuality amongst either compliant or distinct identities of others. Because difference in perspective has historically lead to corruption, injustice, and discord, American organizations currently strive to facilitate progressive depictions of blurred ethnic characteristics through the production and advertisement of new musical sounds.

Can establishments within America or another country devise a strategy efficient in eliminating conventional images correlating with music genres? Such a proposal would hypothetically have to replace notions perceived as young as when the naked eye can recognize and interpret physical differences. Despite the fact that institutions apart of the United States and additional diverse nations increasingly attempt to eradicate divisions amongst ethnic groups through modernist images projected from popular entertainment, music listeners find the most comfort in conforming to expected public perceptions associated with the ethnicities that they identify with.

John Clammer accepts ethnicity as a performance of one’s inner self and emphasizes the potential of this social construct to precipitate disunity. In terms of music, Clammer regards a proclivity for listening to a particular music genre as an exhibition of self-images that mutates in accordance to how society responds to the genre presented. Societal responses naturally determine the insiders and outsiders of the groups that consequently arise. When two distinct ethnic groups become apparent, an imbalance emerges – leaving one unable to disparagingly tease the other and “be quite unacceptable

... where such jokes might easily cross the fine line between humour and insult” (Clammer, 2015). According to this conjecture, the constant performance of ethnicity in daily pursuits strengthens the ties to those belonging to one’s group and enables one to further marginalize opposing groups.

Miri Song similarly examines ethnic identities and the grounds for maintaining them (2003). While family members find reason to remain a collaborative unit, certain ethnicities may likewise think it vital to preserve ancestral ties to complete their sense of belonging. Others discover easier adaptability to a geographical area where they reside as minorities because championing one’s ethnicity could repress prejudices (Song, 2003). If promoting one’s own ethnicity in society best guarantees his or her well-being, an outsider would undoubtedly assume that he or she would represent an innate background through clothing, dialect, and music preferences.

A denial of ethnicity’s impact on the regulation of one’s identity refutes the notion that a person respects his or her ethnicity when identifying with, in this case, a music genre. Loren Kajikawa suggests that rap “culture is transforming the way race is lived by encouraging its practitioners to abandon fixed, essentialist notions of identity and embrace a more fluid, ‘situational model’” (2015) that allows a multitude of personas, not limited to one ethnicity, to produce rap songs as well as to listen to them. This adaptable framework implies American culture advancing toward a means of portraying a fusion of ethnicity through diverse artists creating rap, a varied audience listening to rap songs, and lyrics revealing radical perspectives.

Although Kajikawa highlights contemporary times as catalyzing progressive thought, recent studies show that American institutions do not correspondingly facilitate multicultural acceptance. Students fulfilling requirements of teacher preparation programs overall prefer to teach in monolingual and monocultural educational environmental – indicating that teachers with this liking do not stimulate atmospheres of intersecting backgrounds (Butler, Lind, & McKoy, 2007). This piece of data notably calls attention to the notion that – beginning at a young age – individuals are either persuaded to adhere to the suppositions of their ethnicities or are intimidated out of attempting to act like people that they innately cannot compare to.

Studies investigate the comfort in adhering to an ethnicity’s perceptions in addition to the transformation of popular music in America to encompass new ethnic ideologies, but none thoroughly discuss the relation and overlapping of these two notions. This essay will address the reasons behind ethnic groups staying within expected music genres – even with attempts of American popular music and institutions to evidently incorporate either a mixture of ethnicities or an acceptance of these groups. This analysis will incorporate data obtained by academics knowledge in ethnology, musicology, and sociology to compose an argument well suited for the foundation of a discussion concerning music genres’ influence over eliminating social hierarchies.

### Writing Sample 3 – SF Custom Chiropractic Newsletter

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My acceptance into the SF Custom Chiropractic team spurred a summer of learning and appreciation. While being interviewed, head clinician Dr. Adam Jacobs made it clear that, in the past, he had only hired assistants who could commit to employment for an entire year. However, he commended me for the sample that they asked me to submit and said that he would be happy to hire me with the expectation that I could take on the role of a chiropractic assistant as well as that of a social media specialist. I was honored to work for this clinic and am proud to say that I am still responsible for the office's website, blog, and social media content while studying in Santa Barbara. Toward the end of the summer, Dr. Jacobs asked that I also write the monthly newsletter, which would encapsulate all clinic updates and notifications. The included newsletter is the first that I wrote for the month of August.



**Happy 4<sup>th</sup> from SFCC! Dr. Gustin's New Role and Other Clinic Updates**

**HOLIDAY HOURS**

SF Custom Chiropractic wishes you an enjoyable and safe Independence Day.

We will be closed July 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> in observance of the holiday.

**PAYMENT & CLINIC UPDATES**

Starting July 6<sup>th</sup>, we will be switching over to a new merchant service. Information for cards previously saved on file will need to be recollected accordingly to add to the software. The service is built into our electronic medical records, which will contribute to an easier payment process, both on our end and yours.

Over the next few weeks, we will be expanding our team with the addition of a couple chiropractic interns and college student assistants. We enthusiastically undertake any opportunity to mentor students and look forward to immersing them into our community.

*7x7 Magazine* recently named Dr. Jacobs the best chiropractor in the Bay Area for 2016. This is the second publication this year to do so, and we owe it to our team and clientele for the recognition. Thank you – doctors, staff, and patients – for allowing us to create an atmosphere capable of efficiently treating our diverse client base.

### DR. GUSTIN'S NEW ROLE

As some of you may know, Dr. Gustin strives for optimal nutrition and believes that through consuming whole foods, you're able to fix many health problems.

Last year, this drive led him to start a whole foods based supplement company – [pureWOD](#). Being able to have a much greater impact on nutrition and reach more people, Dr. Gustin will be shifting his day to day focus from his patient care in the gyms and Valencia clinic to growing awareness of pureWOD.

Dr. Gustin has trained Dr. Delghi who will be taking over his role as head clinician of the Valencia Street location for patients who wish to continue care there.

Don't worry! He will still be around and available for anyone who needs to contact him and will be implementing a new nutrition and functional medicine program in January 2017.

Thank you, again, for all of the support. Please reach out to us with any questions, comments, or concerns.

Best,

Dr. Jacobs, Dr. Gustin, Dr. Bailey, Dr. Delghi, and the rest of SFCC staff



### Writing Sample 4 – SF Custom Chiropractic Raffle Sign

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I took my dual position at SF Custom Chiropractic as an opportunity to implement new guidelines, procedures, and events. One of the things I introduced to the clinic was a raffle. I thought that an efficient way to revamp our social media pages and followings would be to have a prize drawing that required our patients to somehow broadcast one of our social media accounts in order to enter. With that said, I gave patients a month to either comment on a specific Facebook post or post a picture on Instagram and mention our account in the caption. As anticipated, our Facebook post and Instagram account got a lot of attention – both from patients and random cyber consumers. At the end of the drawing, I contacted the patient to let her know that she had won a pair of custom foot orthotics, and the office has been instructed to take a picture of her picking up her prize. This, as you could expect, I will post to our social media accounts!

The following is the sign that I created to have placed at the front of both office locations in San Francisco. At the time, I did not have Photoshop and, so, I became creative with Microsoft Word. The doctor was pleased with the result and, not long after, bought me Adobe Photoshop so that I could create bigger – literally – and better posts for the clinic.



Enter to Win!

a **free** pair of  
custom orthotics  
(a \$365 value)



*How to enter:*

1. **Comment** on our **Facebook** post  
**OR**
2. **Mention** (@sfcustomchiro) and **hashtag** (#sfcustomchiro) in an **Instagram** post

Raffle draw: August 26th

## Writing Sample 5 – Letter to CSAC

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I wrote the following letter while reflecting on my junior year. I decided that a wholesome way to surmount previous obstacles would be to speak to them on paper. With that said, I wrote a letter for two reasons. For one, my thoughts could be articulated in a way that an academic piece would restrict. Secondly, I could address the problem and present a solution. I took my idea one step further by researching and finding a person that I wanted to specifically address the letter to. Debra Maxie, one of California Student Aid Commission's representatives, seemed an appropriate candidate as she has expressed her greatest enthusiasm in providing disadvantaged students education and has described herself to be a family person. Because she also is not at the very forefront of the commission, I decided that she would be the most realistic figure to read and to respond to a letter like the one that I have produced.

Kelsey McKeon Johnson  
140 Park Street  
San Francisco, CA 94110  
September 5<sup>th</sup>, 2016

Debra Maxie  
General Public Representative  
Speaker of Assembly Appointee  
California Student Aid Commission  
P.O. Box 419026  
Rancho Cordova, CA 95741-9026

Dear CSAC General Public Representative Debra Maxie,

I write to you as a student, daughter, friend, neighbor, and member of the community. My letter addressed to you cannot currently benefit me. Therefore, I reach out to you on behalf of an ignored population of young adults. I commend and thank you and your fellow colleagues for representing and advocating for California in a way that sustains aid for students across the state. However, it was only in my 2016 winter quarter of junior year that I found myself utterly helpless and hopeless. It was during this quarter that I was barred from attending classes due to my new financial situation. It is my hope that students similar to me can soon withstand a chance in the process of granting funds and loan eligibility.

I think it necessary to understand my background in order for me to attest to the corruption that has led me to write this note. I am the product of a mother and father, both of whom never planned on getting married. My childhood was spent going back and forth between households, as a result of a long drawn out custody battle. I found myself never getting the chance to form a regular routine, or home. My dad and stepmom had my little half-sister when I was eight years old, and from then on, I was treated as a disruption to the family. The verbal and emotional abuse I encountered at their house was alleviated every time I went back to my mom's. Despite her unconditional compassion, my mom has endured severe alcoholism that has worsened since the culmination of court and attorney affairs. The issues apart of each household only intensified as I became older.

One aspect of the abuse I faced in my father's household involved constant manipulation. The times that I stood up for myself lead to disapproval from my dad and stepmom – and therefore, a withdrawal of their financial support. This most recently occurred only a couple weeks before my winter quarter of 2016. After consulting with multiple counselors on campus, I submitted an appeal to UCSB's Financial Aid Office that would allow me to declare myself an independent upon acceptance. This required compiling letters from my psychologist, social worker, and mother that confirmed my financial independence since sophomore year. A week later, an advisor notified me that the board had rejected my appeal because I continue to have contact with my mother. According to the office, it is a parent's choice -- not responsibility -- to either fund a child's education or complete FAFSA. Therefore, since my mom had done neither, the problem was out of their hands. I struggled to discover other options. Ultimately, I learned that there were no loans accessible to me because I did not have a cosigner for

private lenders or FAFSA eligibility due to my mom's inability to file taxes or, let alone, complete the FAFSA application.

FAFSA currently demands that an independent have extreme circumstances that separates him or her from parents or legal guardians or that he or she be 24-years-old. With such precedents in place, who can lobby for the students who cannot ascribe to either circumstance but still is denied the right to their education?

I ask you to review the procedure for evaluating students' eligibility to be awarded aid or loan assistance. I now am taking classes at my university because I was able to come back to San Francisco, take my mother to a free workshop in order to file her taxes from years before, and fill out and submit the FAFSA application myself. However, there is no doubt in my mind that there are students in a similar position with no way to compel their parent or parents to fill out a tedious and personal application. I am sure that you can agree that there is no reason why a student should have to suffer because of his or her parents' or guardians' negligence. We live in a country where education is not only highly valued but also thought of as a right and absolute necessity. Please consider those students that are not given this right and are suffering.

Sincerely,

Kelsey McKeon Johnson