**Personal Statement**

**Critical questions to answer:**

- Why do you want to go to graduate school (big picture)?
  - What do you want to do with the rest of your life? (industry or academia or something else)
  - How will graduate school help you accomplish this goal?
- What do you want to study/research in graduate school?
  - What specific areas of engineering excite you? Why?
  - What research (or academic) experience do you have which will help you pursue this topic(s)?
- Why do you want to go to “X” graduate school?
  - Is there a specific professor(s) who is a leader in your chosen field?
  - Is the school known for being strong in your chosen field?
  - Does the school offer something unique? (an interdisciplinary program?)

**What not to do:**

- Include a poem or quote
- Include a childhood story
- Include a picture
- Discuss financial topics (how you can’t go to grad school without financial support)
- Discuss personal issues (marriage, children)