



University of Notre Dame

- Accepted College Essay -

**You have just completed your 300-page autobiography. Please submit page 217.**

I remember feeling my stomach do a flip turn as I watched who entered the room. A friend of mine was sitting in front of the Honor Council. At my high school, the Honor Council is an elected group of six students including four faculty advisors, which hears cases of students who have broken the school's honor code: "I pledge on my honor not to lie, cheat, steal, plagiarize, or vandalize." I was elected at the end of my sophomore year to the position and had promised my peers to hear cases with an unbiased ear and to speak for all of them in the panel's discussions. It was not until I was hearing the case of a friend that I knew how difficult that promise was going to be.

As the meeting started, I quickly learned that she was the person who had been stealing money from lockers. The most troubling aspect of the case was that we had been friends since the third grade and had shared a number of special moments; I had never expected her to be the culprit. I remembered her dethroning me as champion in a multiplication game in Lower School and more recently joking about one of the funnier names in our AP US History book, Terrence Powderly. These thoughts echoed as she began her testimony.

She stated that she merely found herself stealing money one day, and then the problem grew into a destructive habit. She asked for our forgiveness. After she left, the council discussed proper punishments, which included expulsion, for nearly an hour and a half. I weighed our friendship and my knowledge that she was a kind person versus her serious, knowing transgression. When the time for the vote finally came, I felt physically and emotionally drained, but I had reached a decision. I raised my hand in favor of expulsion. I knew that my convictions for upholding the honor code were too strong to not vote for her removal. Her violations had been clear and unequivocal, and although she was my friend, I did not feel that she could remain at our school. The final decision rested on the head of school.

I learned a few days later that my friend had indeed been expelled, and that part of what influenced the head of school's decision was the Honor Council's unanimous vote favoring expulsion. I was extremely disappointed to see a friend leave the school, but I knew that her blatant disregard for the values of the community made her unfit to attend. I was proud that I had assembled the courage to vote for expulsion, especially when my fellow junior on the council abstained from voting. I believe that deciding whether to favor the expulsion of a fellow student and friend was one of the most difficult decisions of my life. It was only after I had seen the school's secretary clean out my friend's locker that I realized how much courage I had mustered to make such an emotional decision.

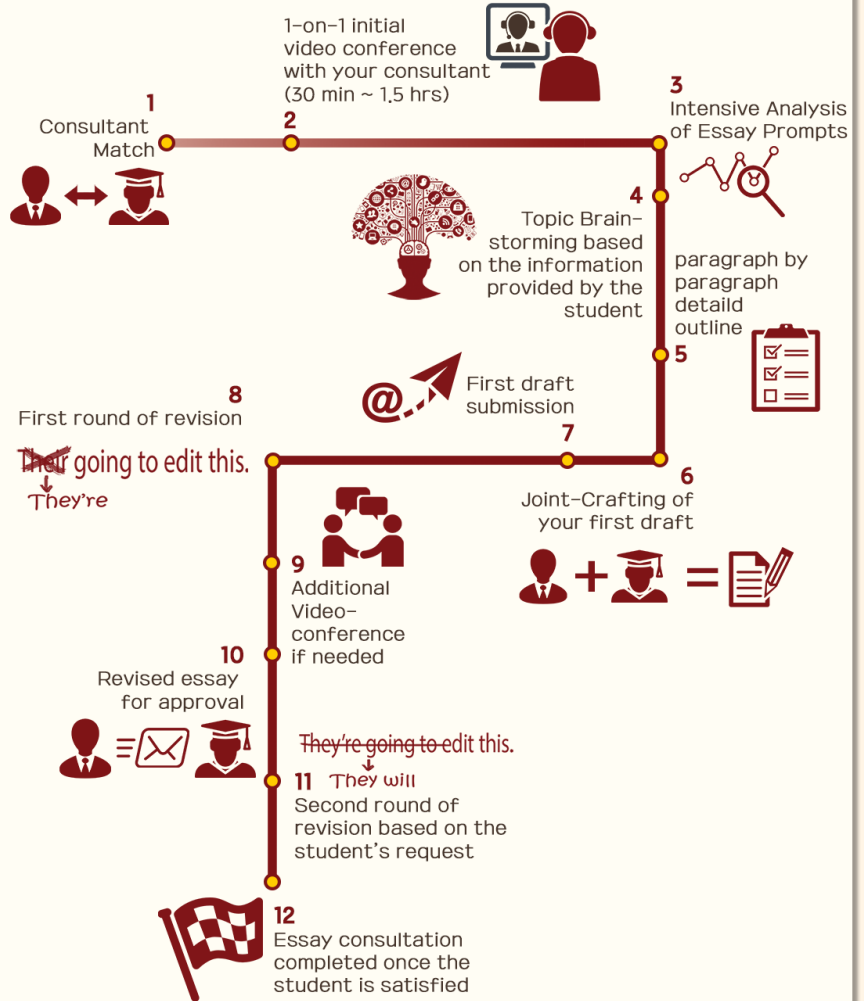
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