Statement of Justification for Graduate Education Exams

My name is [blank] and I am a member of the [blank] at Hunter College. I am an Urban Studies, Public Policy double major and a Psychology, Sociology double minor. I am applying for funding for the post-graduate and licensing exam review course for the Spring 2012 semester.

The GRE Kaplan program appeals to me for several reasons. It is a well-established, accredited organization that has a proven track record of helping high achieving college students test well on the Graduate Record Examinations. Additionally, its eight classroom sessions, concluding on April 28, 2012, with accompanying practice tests and study material, provides comprehensive instruction to best help undergraduates prepare for the test. Kaplan can provide me with the academic support I need to do well on the GREs.

My Capstone Project for my Macaulay Honors Thesis is a study of how different ethnic groups and their communities handle grief. To do this, I have explored funeral practices throughout New York City. Therefore I have talked to funeral directors concerning their experiences with burial rites and funeral customs. My thesis comprises both video documentation of these interviews, a written paper, and an online website. The processes of grief and death are inevitable, yet how this process is handled is unique to every ethnic group. The continued rise of urban regions worldwide has shifted national attention from rural to urban locales. The growth of the city provides a focal point through which to examine changing populations that move and develop in cities for a variety of purposes. Urban development has caused an improvement in health, increased
industrialization, a rise in technology, greater demands of labor, and the creation of a stable nation-state. By studying urbanization, the process involved when people settle in densely populated areas, and urbanism, social patterns of behaviors that arise from urban life, we can better predict how the world as a whole will change within the upcoming decades. The heart of Hunter College's Urban Studies curriculum is the combination of classroom theory with hands-on participation. Last winter I studied abroad in Hawaii, which allowed me the chance to study the area's distinctive mourning and funeral practices while adding a whole new dimension to my project. By comparing and contrasting not only varying ethnic groups in New York City but throughout America, I have strengthen my Capstone Project to further my education.

After graduation, I look forward to continuing my academic career, as I become a family therapist and an expert in grief counseling or emergency management in a hospital setting. Having an extensive knowledge of how different immigrant groups handle the process of grieving is crucial, especially within a metropolitan health care center. To effectively relate to others' pain and suffering at such a difficult, distinct moment in their lives requires the ability to comprehend what they are going through. I expect to garner this information from what I learn during the completion of my Capstone Project. Since my Capstone and urban studies education have been primarily New York City-based, the opportunity to visit and observe life and funeral practices in Hawaii furthered my undergraduate research. By comparing how people grieve across America, I can better understand how to help someone heal here in New York City. The chance to study
immigrant groups through an urban studies lens can help me find more efficient ways to
give back to my community.

In order to pursue a Licensed Clinical Social Work degree and eventually go on to
earn my PhD, it is essential that I receive my training at a well-respected graduate school.
It is crucial for my future academic narrative to take the Graduate Record Examinations. A
strong score on my graduate exams, in addition to my high grade point average, Phi Beta
Kappa membership, Capstone research, and solid extracurricular accomplishments will
assist me in getting into the graduate program of my choice.