**SoP Brainstorming Questions**

**Motivation**

* What is motivating you to pursue a graduate degree?
* Are there personal experiences that illustrate your interest in going to graduate school?
* What are your research interests?
* What are your career objectives?
* What kind of impact do you want your research and career to have?
* What do you want to study in graduate school and why?

**Experiences (Part 1)**

* What experiences do you have that prepare you for graduate school? What did you learn from these experiences?
* What research experiences have you had? What did you learn from the experience(s)? What skill sets did you develop? How was the experience valuable to your intellectual/professional growth?
* What other experiences (teaching, mentoring, volunteering, internship, leadership, extracurricular, etc.) have been formative in your decision to pursue a graduate degree and/or your research interests and career objectives?

**Experiences (Part 2)**

* What connections can you make between your research interests and your research experiences?
* What connections can you make between your professional experiences and your research interests and/or objectives?
* What did you learn from your professional and/or academic experiences? What about these experiences have been impactful?

**Fit to Program (Part 1)**

* What about the program is of interest to you?
* How does the program focus align with your research interests and career objectives?
* Which faculty are you especially interested in working with? How does their research intersect with your own research interests?
* How will attending this program help you achieve your objectives?

**Fit to Program (Part 2)**

* After finding a program, how do you know the program is a good fit for you? How does the program, the courses, the research, professors, etc. align with your research interests? How would attending the program help you achieve the objectives you identified in Section 2?
* What other information do you need about the program to ensure it is the right fit you?
* Are there any irregularities in your application and/or experience which you need to account for?