Clarification/elaboration of rubric elements—see the specific rubrics for these elements. Although each rubric has four benchmarks we will assess them on a five-point scale that includes “0” for does not meet benchmark. (Note that order below is modified from the rubric.)

**Analytical Essay**

The five elements for the **Critical Thinking Rubric** map onto what we specified in our directions.

1) Explanation of issues: We ask applicants to “clearly explain the policy issue.”

2) Student’s position: We ask applicants to “describe the major contending views” and “articulate your position.”

3) Evidence: We ask applicants to “defend your position with relevant evidence.”

4) Conclusions and related outcomes: We tell students we will evaluate the essay based on “the clarity and coherence of its argument” and “the overall quality of its analysis and writing.” I suggest that we focus on the logical coherence and argumentative clarity for this element. Does the argument fit together and is it easy to follow?

5) Influence of context and assumptions: We tell students we will evaluate the essay based on “the clarity and coherence of its argument” and “the overall quality of its analysis and writing.” I suggest that we focus on the depth, nuance, and sophistication of the analysis for this element. Does the argument acknowledge conflicting views, multiple stakeholders, alternate strategies for addressing the policy issue?

6) Interpretation (from **Quantitative Literacy Rubric**): We tell applicants we will evaluation their data interpretation on “your understanding and translation of quantitative data.”

7) Control of Syntax and Mechanics (from **Written Communication Rubric**): We tell applicants we will evaluate their essay based on “the overall quality of its analysis and writing.” I suggest that we use this rubric as a measure of writing, especially at the sentence level.

**Statement of Purpose**

Three elements from the **Written Communication Rubric** map onto what we specific in our directions.

1) Context and Purpose for Writing: We ask applicants to “tell us why you want to pursue graduate study in environmental studies at Evergreen” and tell them we will “assess your interest and motivation for graduate study” and “gauge the fit between what our program offers and what you hope to receive from it.” I suggest that we use this element as a measure of the applicant’s ability to articulate their interest, motivation, and fit with the program.

2) Content Development: We ask applicants to “describe in some detail your experiences in education, employment, and public or community work” and “explain how they influenced you to seek a graduate degree in environmental studies.” I suggest that we use this element as a measure of the applicant’s ability to illustrate and support their interest, motivation, and fit using specific examples.

3) Control of Syntax and Mechanics: We tell applicants we will evaluate their statement of purpose based on “clarity, analysis, and general writing skills.” I suggest that we use this rubric as a measure of writing, especially at the sentence level.