An Effective Application Essay
A Checklist for Self-Evaluation

In terms of content, the essay...
___ answers the question asked
___ has a thesis, a clear central point
___ is analytical rather than simply descriptive (it shows rather than tells)
___ is unified, focused and cohesive (includes only information relevant to the topic)
___ anticipates the reader's needs

In terms of organization, the essay...
___ has a clear sense of introduction (avoids throat clearing, addresses the question directly)
___ has a clear sense of conclusion (pulls things together at the end rather than stopping abruptly)
___ carries the reader along by using effective transitions (“First of all,” or “In contrast,”)

In terms of expression, the essay...
___ achieves an appropriate tone (confident, enthusiastic, upbeat, reflective)
___ avoids inappropriate tones (groveling, pretentious, whining, arrogant, cynical)
___ in written in a voice that is authentic, that sounds like me (at my most articulate moments)
___ is concise and to the point rather than long winded and circuitous
___ avoids cliched observations, phrases, expressions and words
___ avoids slang (except when used intentionally for a specific effect)

In terms of correctness, the essay...
___ observes the conventions of grammar and usage (no errors)
___ observes the conventions of punctuation (no errors)
___ has no spelling errors
___ has been PROOFREAD carefully for errors
___ has been proofread again
___ has been proofread yet again
___ provides details and examples to support and enliven generalizations