Dear Michelle Roque Alvarez,

My name is Brian Ma and I'm currently a senior at Columbia University. I'm doing a Dual Degree Program, which consisted of 3 years at a Liberal Arts College and 2 years at an Engineering School. At Colgate University I majored in Physics, with minors in Mathematics and Jewish Studies. At Columbia I'm majoring in Computer Science, with a focus on Human Computer Interaction, Graphics, and Web Technologies. I found that knowledge from both majors combined really well. For example, at Hulu I was able to utilize my physics knowledge in a JavaScript project, and our team ultimately won the Coolest Hackathon project prize. I feel to really lucky to have the opportunity of learning things from a bunch of really diverse fields, and I really enjoyed the multiple perspectives it gave me, which I hope to bring to Duolingo as a Software Engineer.

I'm also experienced with User Centered Design, which is important for the more user facing aspects of Duolingo. I'm currently a Teaching Assistant for Columbia's UI Design class, where I mentor around 20 students. I've also worked at two HCI research labs and produced two publications, both as second author. These projects involve a lot of user studies, so I have significant experience in interacting with the users of the software I build.

For one of the publications, I worked extensively with blind and visually impaired people. I know, as a company focused on making education free, fun, and accessible to all, accessibility regardless of disability is absolutely essential. Therefore, I try to put as much of the accessibility best-practices I have learned into my Front-end projects. For example, my personal website ([www.brian.ma](http://www.brian.ma)) uses ARIA labels extensively.

I have been a longtime user of Duolingo, and I have always been passionate about language learning and software engineering. Working at Duolingo is a dream of mine and I hope you will consider me!

Sincerely,

Brian