Second Essay

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Journey

My passion for computer engineering was ignited when a 14-year-old me discovered Arduinos online. I was fascinated by the idea of making intelligent and autonomous robots, which prompted me to get my hands on an Arduino and embark on a journey that continues.

The culmination of my experiences in electronics, robots, and coding enticed me to pursue computer engineering at Sharif. My curiosity about how things are made led me from Arduinos to computer architecture and formed my current interest.

My passion for creating and tinkering has set me on a research path. In a very abstract sense, I love creating. In art, I enjoy painting; in research, this is reified as designing hardware. At this point, I intend to start a Ph.D. journey to develop my skills and continue doing what I have always enjoyed: creating. I aspire to leverage the experience of my Ph.D. to continue research in industrial setups to breathe life into research.

Barriers and Perseverance

Embarking on a Ph.D. journey requires perseverance, which I have developed as a consequence of my research experience. Almost every manuscript I collaborated on has been rejected at least once. After my first rejection, I was heartbroken. After the seventh, I was grateful for the criticisms and started brainstorming how to improve our proposal.

This experience equipped me with the resilience and perseverance to pursue a Ph.D. Moreover, my two years of research experience have been a demo of a Ph.D. journey: juggling between coursework, TA duties, and relentless submission deadlines. Consequently, I feel prepared to take on this new challenge.

Moreover, the experience of conducting research in my country had its challenges. We do not have many resources, including institutional access to scientific libraries, grants for symposiums and conferences, or equipment for experiments on real-life devices. While these limitations are indeed barriers, they have helped develop our resourcefulness. We have adapted to these shortages and have learned to be creative in pursuing research with fewer facilities to overcome these barriers.

Diversity and Service

In tandem with my research experience, I have volunteered as a TA in my department's courses every semester since my second year. One of the chief outcomes of this experience is engagement with a vast pool of students from an incredibly diverse background: Iran is ethnically diverse and home to Persians, Kurds, Turks, Balochs, and other peoples. Our community at Sharif UT brings all these groups together. My service also includes mentoring first-year students on the basics of electronics and Arduinos, hoping to share my joy with them.

Furthermore, during my internship at EPFL, I experienced a cosmopolitan community and worked with people from multiple countries. I firmly believe that our goals in science unite us, and our different backgrounds will complement each other. As a result, I embrace diversity, and with this mindset, I find myself prepared and excited to collaborate within MIT's cosmopolitan community. Additionally, I can contribute to MIT's diversity by bringing my unique culture and background.