***Tell us why you decided to apply to the University of Wisconsin-Madison. In addition, please include why you are interested in studying the major(s) you have selected. If you selected undecided please describe your areas of possible academic interest. (650 words).***

"Dek?" (short for *adek* meaning little sibling), my mother taps me on the shoulder. She had been astounded by her sleepless 8-year-old illustrating a skeletal system on an early Saturday morning. I made small lines across its sections: from the radius, the ulna, the metacarpals, and the metatarsals. I repeated those names as I gave labels on my diagram, attempting to memorize even the tiniest of bones.

As time passed, my fascination in biological sciences grew and so did the desire to extend the application of my knowledge apart from concept memorization. Thus, I volunteered at a medical research facility in Kei Besar, Indonesia, where I apprenticed doctors, nutritionists, and pharmacists at the clinic. I met one mother in particular, whose stunted 9-month-old son weighed as much as he did when he was 3 months old. The mother could not breastfeed, and the child consumed small portions of rice with vegetables alone. Following my studies in molecular biology, I advised her to increase his calorie intake by incorporating protein: a macronutrient that provides cell structure and support, hence crucial in one's growth. Since meat and poultry were not an option, she began feeding him eggs and *tempe* (fermented soybeans). Both were affordable, yet protein-rich products.

To say the least, the experience had deepened my social conscience. It introduced me to the challenge of tackling medicine in conditions which hinder the maintenance of nutrition, namely geographic isolation and lack of information. I have since developed strong aspirations to enhance the state of healthcare and its literacy in my local community.

Thus, I was drawn to UW-Madison’s biochemistry program in the College of Agricultural and Life Sciences. Following the footsteps of my older brother, the opportunities offered by UW-Madison paves a way for the fulfillment of my personal goals and ambitions.

Given its course on “Nutritional Biochemistry and Metabolism” under Professor Brian Parks, I would be able to explore in-depth about the biochemical and physiological fundamentals of nutrition and its role in metabolism. In addition, I plan to participate in student-led organizations that benefit public health, such as the Medical Advocacy Venture Outreach Cornerstone. I imagine myself deep in conversations with my peers about addressing the need for more accessible healthcare to aid the underprivileged. Through enhancing my comprehension of nutritional biochemistry and providing hands-on experiences with patients, these would become a setting stone prior to organizing outreaches of my own in the future. I hope to grow as a knowledgeable, yet open-minded individual: surely desired upon becoming a medical researcher.

Furthermore, I look forward to working with Professor Judith Kimble in studying the mechanism of stem cell differentiation, directing its research on treating degenerative conditions, including osteoarthritis—a disease affecting my mother. Seeing first hand the long-term outcome of mesenchymal stem cell (MSC) therapy, I became increasingly curious how research may improve the outlook of individuals with certain predispositions to the disease, such as myself. I intend to delve deeper into this area of research through collaborating with like-minded researchers in the Kimble Lab, thus allowing me to gain familiarity with modern biotechnological approaches to address medical concerns.

Aside from academics, I also felt instant excitement with the possibility of joining the Photography Club. I hope to refine my techniques in film photography by sharing insight with experienced members, while simultaneously expanding my social network. Moreover, I had even practiced the hobby throughout my two-time visit to the campus.

Whether taking photographs of the breathtaking sunset overlooking Lake Mendota, or renting bikes to explore near the State Capitol, it truly left a lasting impression. Not only is UW-Madison the ideal school to guide my passion in biochemistry, but its welcoming atmosphere makes it an honor to someday call myself a Badger.