Many people may think that I was from a financial decent family since I was born in Beijing, China. However, my tuition as an international student was really high, and my parents needed to spend more than 15 years of savings. This financial burden placed constant pressure on me, forcing me to restrict my spending to essentials like meals and rent.

This constraint made me maximize the value of my education. I immersed myself in a wide range of coursework, including programming languages, compilers, operating systems, and computer architecture. This broad exposure provided me with a strong foundation and sparked my interest in research and problem-solving. The financial pressure made me determined to seize every opportunity to learn and grow.

To ease this burden and gain valuable experience, I worked under Jeff Erickson, developing an autograder for the algorithms course, and as a lab assistant in the ECE department. These roles deepened my understanding of complex topics, improved my communication skills, and allowed me to collaborate with peers and professors. Teaching and mentoring others further solidified my academic interests and strengthened my preparation for future research.

These experiences have shaped me into someone driven to excel academically and contribute meaningfully to my field. I turned financial hardship into a driving force, which impelled me to work harder, seek knowledge, and embrace every opportunity that came along.