How does the University of Chicago, as you know it now, satisfy your desire for a particular kind of learning, community, and future? Please address with some specificity your own wishes and how they relate to UChicago.

Every couple of years my family embarks on the 8,122-mile voyage to Bangalore, India to visit our family. Those memories are stained, however, with moments of stepping around the litter piled high on streets and the smell of garbage following you as you walk. The increase in undisposed trash is directly related to the depletion of clean water and air and a subsequent incline in disease as well. For this reason, I aspire to build trash-collecting robots that can collect and transport trash to newly constructed landfills or recycling centers, while also being able to withstand the rugged terrain of India’s streets and its infamous tsunami-type rainstorms.

While this may seem like an overzealous and daunting task, UChicago has exactly what I need to pursue my aspirations. Undergraduate research opportunities are widely available in the topics I am interested in: computer science and robotics. The opportunity to apply classroom instruction to real-life engineering problems to create something that I am passionate about is not something every school has. I’ll be learning under faculties such as Professor Michael O'Donnell and Professor Gina Anne Levow both whose research on human-robot interaction, machine learning, and robot cognition can help me make my aspirations come to fruition.

For me, team projects are one of the most exciting aspects of UChicago. Most of the life-changing projects we hear about today in technology are rarely created by one person alone. I’ll be surrounded by people pushing me to set the bar higher for myself, allowing me to grow and learn from my fellow peers instead of competing against them. I’ll be working with diverse individual and creative thinkers who will challenge my take on a solution, showing me simpler, more innovative solutions to a problem. Each of us comes from different backgrounds, and working together will exemplify the power of communication and the tenacity required for success.

UChicago’s campus life is an amalgam of a myriad of different cultures. It runs the gamut from an academically driven subculture centered on serious intellectual debates to an explorative, supportive one. The school has one of the widest ranges of subcultures out of any elite university, making it easy to find like-minded peers throughout my college career.

In addition, UChicago’s emphasis on liberal arts only elevates its engineering program. It elicits creativity, resulting in a truly brilliant amalgamation of unique and diverse perspectives vital in creating the technology of the future. UChicago is a leader in meditating on the meaning and purpose of education and I plan on shaping that conversation through my love of learning in my years at UChicago.

What most excites me about UChicago is the passion and empathy exhibited by its students. While on a college visit, I heard students discussing the mathematics of dancing. They were so enthralled with the conversation, that I was sucked in as well. The students even invited me to lunch with them to continue the discussion and at that moment I knew UChicago was where I belonged. I fell in love with the diverse and beautiful campus and its people. I had found a place where I fit in, I had found a home.

Society is reliant on technology and being a part of this ever-growing industry will pave the way for what is yet to come. I’m not just another statistic of women in STEM, I’m strong and resourceful, hardworking, and motivated. The next time I walk on India’s sidewalks, I’ll no longer see people coughing from the polluted air, but instead taking in deep, clean breaths. I’m an intelligent leader who’ll reinvent society one wrapper at a time.