Why are you going to college?

I want to work in the field of computer science, specifically general computer science, Artificial Intelligence, or Cybersecurity. My interest in Computers and technology has stemmed from my participation in FIRST programs such as FIRST Lego League and FIRST Robotics.

What events, circumstances or experiences have had a major impact on your way of thinking either positively or negatively? (For example, moving, cultural differences, accident, family circumstances, death, special opportunities, etc.)

I have not had any major negative events in my life, but I have had many great opportunities that have allowed me to discover my interests. In the fourth grade, I decided to join guitar club. It was here that I discovered my musical aptitude. I then joined concert band in fifth grade. Through connections I met in band, I was invited to a FIRST lego league team, then FIRST Robotics, which allowed me to discover my interest for technology and computing.

Please list any extracurricular activities you are involved in (responsibilities, clubs, sports, etc.). Do you work? If so, where and how much?

I perform in the school concert and marching band, as well as extracurricular music such as Solo and Ensemble and separate clarinet lessons. (all four years)

I pitch, play 1st base and outfield for the baseball team. (every year we've had a season)

I am in the environmental club, where I have helped make the school more environmentally friendly by working towards the removal of Styrofoam products, learning about composting, and attending the Environment competition. (Sophomore, Junior, hoping to meet this year when we go back to school)

I have been a member of the robotics team since freshman year. This year, I am the software lead, which means that I am responsible for organizing and coordinating the creation of code for our robot. We have been meeting virtually this year to prepare for a season that we hope to have.

I also am a member of Community Chapel Church (and their teen group). In the summer of 2019, I went to a youth conference with the teen group, during which we helped make The Shoe that Grows, an adjustable shoe that is distributed to those in need.

I umpire for the Merrimack Softball Program and for USA Softball tournaments in the spring and summer. For the past three years, I have volunteered as an umpire for special Olympic softball.

I also work an average of 20 hours per week for the Gap Factory store at the Outlets.

List three words that describe you well. Please explain with specific examples

Fast Learner- I picked up music very quickly, and continue to learn my songs fast. I also learn from my classes quickly and am interested enough to delve deeper into some topics than the school would (For example, in fifth grade we were learning basic chemistry and I taught myself electronegativity, electron configurations, and Lewis dot models)

Easygoing- I tend to go with the flow and adapt to change well. It takes a lot to get me angry, and when I do, I don't stay angry long.

Curious- I enjoy learning and try to learn as much as I can about a variety of topics. When I see something new, I usually try to learn how it works.

What do you like to do for fun? (Hobbies, other special interests?)

I play clarinet and guitar in my free time. When it is nice out, I love going hiking or trail biking. I am also interested in computers and have just finished building myself one.

Please give an example of a failure, disappointment or criticism and how you reacted to it.

I had been planning for my personal computer for about 5 months, and I spent over $1000 on parts. Once I finished assembling it, I plugged it in, turned it on, it was stuck on the opening screen. I was devastated because, despite my best efforts, the computer was not working as it should. Rather than give up, I decided to immediately research the problem. After a few hours of determined searching, trial and error, and reaching out to the computer support group that I am a member of, I discovered the problem, was able to fix it, and after that my computer works great. I'm glad that I stuck to it and was able to accomplish it myself.

Describe an academic experience you had that was very important to you?

My first VLACS class which I took last year, Foundations of Programming, was an interesting experience. It really taught me how to set aside and manage my time wisely so that I could have it done on time. Because it spanned from the fall of 2019 to the end of the school year in 2020, lessons that I had learned in time management from VLACS were very helpful and allowed me to stay academically productive throughout quarantine, which allowed me to improve my average grade between semester 1 and 2.

What are your academic strengths?

Planning Skills: I am good at prioritizing my work and getting it done when it needs to be. I can also adapt to changes that would interfere with my plan.

Perseverance: When faced with a challenge, I will continue to work at it until it is solved. If I need to take a break, I do, but I don't stop thinking about solutions to the problem until it has been resolved.

Visualization: I am good at stepping out of a problem and looking at it from a different angle, seeing how all the pieces of a problem fit together. This allows me to split a task into smaller, separate tasks, which I can then accomplish easier.

Teamwork: I am good at working as a member of a team. I help coordinate with my group members to ensure that everyone is aware of the part that they play. I also provide any necessary support as we work together towards a common goal.

What major(s) and what career(s) are you considering, and why?

I am planning on majoring in computer science and going into either Computer Science Research, Machine learning or Cybersecurity. I have been programming with the school robotics team since freshman year, and I have followed computer news. I love hearing about new advances in machine learning. Last year, I attended an instructional clinic in machine learning and neural networks with some of my peers from robotics. I also have a family friend who has worked as a white hat (ethical) hacker and has helped me learn some basic cyber security.

What did you do last summer?

Last summer, I managed to keep myself busy. I played for a NEIBL Baseball team. I also kept my musical interest active by taking weekly clarinet lessons and by continuing to teach myself guitar. In order to stay active outside of baseball, I went trail biking once or twice a week, either locally or at nearby rail trails. Whenever I had free time, I hung out with friends online and planned out my computer build. I also worked around 20 hours per week at the outlets.

What are you, uniquely, going to contribute to your college community?

I think my friendly nature, combined with my love for helping and encouraging others would be an asset to any academic or extracurricular program I am a part of. I am a problem solver, and will dedicate myself to a task until it is complete to my high standards. Through the Chop Shop robotics program I have learned leadership skills that allow me to organize myself and others and to inspire people to work together to achieve a common goal. I would also bring my musical talents to any ensemble in a college setting.