

KP Engineering Fellow Application Questions

By Colton Wolk

Personal Statement #1: What impact do you want to have on the world and why?

I aim to improve the state of the world through technological innovation. That's the short answer.

Now, here's the motivation:

I enjoy being on the forefront of new technology, and I always look toward future opportunities. Every day, I try as hard as I can to soak in the endless buffet of discovery and information to find out where we are, and where we can be.

From reporting on innovation policy in my journalism internship to researching self-assembling robots at Tufts, I am able to contribute, in some small way, to society's technological progress. And I don't hold the information in — for over two years, I have been a teaching assistant for Tufts' "Algorithms" computer science course, teaching recitations and providing others with the tools to contribute themselves.

These experiences give me the opportunity to play a small but real role in the inexorable technological development we all experience daily. Though I may not always achieve instant gratification, I believe that my and others' work collectively pave the way for larger innovations.

In fact, I get a tremendous amount of satisfaction from seeing how even the smallest of improvements work together to change the world. It is my belief that the best parts of human nature are revealed during this process of innovation. There is something truly different about our emotions when we step out of the mindset and beyond the limitations of the past and think toward the future.

Personal Statement #2: Describe your most meaningful experience(s) and why they matter to you.

Being eight years old when it happened, I didn't understand what my parents' divorce meant.

But while many struggles would soon become apparent, so would the rewards—the rewards of the new family members I would soon meet, and all of the values and traditions they would bring along with them.

For example, I met my mom's boyfriend, John, in 2010. A lawyer, sports-enthusiast, and book-devourer from birth, John has been a driving force behind my thirst for knowledge. From the dozens of intriguing articles he curates for me weekly to our debates about grammar, I have learned more worldly knowledge because of John's influence than because of anyone else's in my life—including not only facts and information, but also values and morals. John's history of kindness and selflessness, such as his years spent volunteering with children in Micronesia, changed my mindset and inspired me to set aside more of my time for others, like building a mobile app for a Cambridge homeless shelter.

Throughout my life, I have been surrounded by amazing people in my immediate and extended family, such as John, whom I am so fortunate to have learned from. Between the moral values of kindness, generosity, and thoughtfulness that have been integral to their lives and the practical knowledge and ambition they have taught me through words and actions, I have been inspired to take new paths in my life, especially those involving community service, entrepreneurial objectives, and educational challenge and risk.