My experiences over the past several years have led me on an initially desultory but always valuable path which I believe is excellent preparation for a PhD in economics at the University of Arizona. I entered University of Bridgeport as a finance major because of what I valued most- Principles of Economics and Finance. During my undergrad years studying Mechanical Engineering, I took a few economics classes by chance and have been fascinated with the field ever since. I am lucky to have found my true passion, economics, and I feel proud to have excelled in it. As a means of complementing my economics classes, I focused on studying math and taking more research focused courses during my years at University of Bridgeport. I am confident that I have the technical capabilities to succeed in University of Arizona’s core requirements for the PhD. However, I feel that my best strengths are my passion, creativity, and ability to work independently. These skills are what I believe will help me to become a successful researcher. My passion for research comes from two sources- intellectual curiosity and my experiences in econometrics and quantitative portfolio management. Having spent significant time in Moldova, Morocco, and Colombia, I now have refined ideas regarding my specific interests within economics. For example, I developed an interest in the causes and effects of income inequality from observing the two extremes of Bogotá, which provide a much starker contrast than the two sides of the Tijuana-San Diego border. This overwhelming disparity defied the knowledge that I had acquired from scholastic economics (e.g., Law of One Price). My frequent volunteer trips into the most impoverished part of Bogotá, Ciudad Bolívar, provided me with an introduction to poverty and inequality that no class or text book could have adequately illustrated. This suppression of social mobility pervades all aspects of Colombia's economic and social structures. Social connections play a far more important role in getting high-placed jobs than in richer countries. Hence, it is hard to imagine how commonly suggested improvements, such as improving public education, can have a strong impact on incomes if in the job market, human capital is humbled in importance by social connections. Living in Colombia helped me to discern fundamental differences between developed and developing countries, and how these variances often lead to violations of assumptions on which economic theories rely. Upon returning from Colombia, I undertook a research project analyzing the effects of study abroad on a student's grade point average. I began the project in the honors sections of Professors [Name1] and [Name2]. I was allowed a lot of latitude regarding what I could do to complete the requirements. I responded very well to this type of freedom and ended up spending more time on the project than on any of my classes. After satisfying the demands of the honors sections, I continued to develop the project under their guidance and finally wrote a comprehensive paper. My analysis was more effective than ones used in similar studies because I collected better data and used a superior methodology. In order to identify the causal effect, I control for selection into the study abroad program by only using students who applied and were accepted. I learned a lot from this experience about control groups and various applied econometric tools. I found that, for undergraduates, studying abroad has a significantly positive impact on grades in classes taken at [my university] after return. In addition to plans for publishing the paper, I also presented it at a conference of the Association of International Educators. I am most proud of the fact that I carried this project from start to finish without extra incentives. I was not in an undergraduate thesis program, and I was not even sure about pursuing a PhD at the time; I simply enjoyed the challenge. During a summer fellowship at the [Name of a small institute], I completed another individual research project hypothesizing a cause for the lack of a leap-frog effect in regards to property rights in developing countries. These individual research endeavors led me to participate in projects coordinated by professors. I helped Professor [Name1] on a project analyzing the outcomes of children who receive special education as the result of a governmental program, Supplemental Security Income. Similarly, I contributed to a project coordinated by Professor [Name2] by researching terrorist groups and their suspected hierarchical structures. Finally, I assisted Professor [Name3] on a project dealing with variation in the amount of different industries in which there is trade between two given countries. I am now co-authoring a paper 7 with Professor [Name3] on the development of the Arab world, which will be published in [Name of a journal]. In addition to development economics and international trade, I am also interested in other subfields of economics in the context of troubled countries. For example, public economics, monetary economics, and labor take on different forms in the framework of developing countries. I plan on scrutinizing the underlying characteristics of developing countries which yield different outcomes from developed countries. The research and life experiences I have had, combined with my training in theory, provide me with a good start towards becoming a successful researcher. My goal is to be a professor of economics at a leading research university. Generating new ideas is the most exciting activity possible for me. The challenge of coming up with something original, thinking in a way or with a subtlety that was previously ignored, turns research into an art which requires creativity and perseverance. Working without daily supervision necessitates a passion that I know I have. I can tell that research is right for me because I have fun doing it. I am determined to make the most of the education that I have received from my classes and life by following my indefatigable quest for knowledge and sharing what I discover with the academic world.