Duke is working to establish the research triangle as the "Silicon Valley of the South" through the Innovation and Entrepreneurship Center. Given my connection to North Carolina and my background in computer science, I want to help further establish the community of innovators in this area. Over the last few years, I took a targeted marketing communications software platform from concept to production service. Along the way, I gained critical insight into the intricacies and nuances of developing a high-quality, functioning software platform, including architecting software systems, prototyping, presenting demos, ensuring regulatory compliance, implementing testing/verification strategies, coordinating software releases, and supporting systems in production. Long story short, even simple software ideas can have cascading downstream effects that the less experienced would need help navigating. Though I have experience navigating these software development pipelines and have concrete conceptual knowledge from my educational background, I need to gain experience in many other aspects of innovating and getting ideas to market. In Duke Innovation and Entrepreneurship and the Entrepreneurship and Venture Capital Club, I can contribute as a "builder" of ideas and gain the holistic innovator experience I lack. I plan to use my technical expertise to help my Entrepreneurship and VC clubmates by assessing the viability of their ideas, proposing technical solutions, building prototypes, and formulating company technical strategies. As I do so, I will gain practical experience in all other facets of entrepreneurship and become an influential innovator.

At Dexcom, I wanted to reach outside my day-to-day responsibilities, so I asked to help conduct interviews to hire software engineers. In my interviews, I learned how to discern top talent. It was insightful to see how great a discrepancy can exist between how good a candidate looks on a resume and how that candidate performs as an engineer. Companies—especially start-ups—need to acquire top engineering talent to stay competitive, and innovators with great ideas can stumble in finding sound engineers to build their ideas. I will use my experience vetting software engineering candidates to help my Entrepreneurship and VC clubmates source the "builders" for their ideas. In the Health Care Club, I want to lead a workshop on hiring practices for software engineers.

One pervasive problem in regulated industries is that organizations adopt processes and develop cultures that restrict corporate agility, thus stymieing disruptive innovation. When I started working at Dexcom, I spent about half of each software release cycle doing documentation and regulatory work. This burden slowed down the rate at which my team could innovate. I decided to automate much of our regulatory documentation creation so that we could spend more time creating actual value rather than dealing with overhead. At Fuqua, I want to learn how to address these industry problems and prepare my classmates who plan to enter heavily regulated industries. In the Health Care Club, I want to present on the importance of agile development while conforming to regulatory processes at a club event.