

Motivation *In Pursuit of Disruption* 2017

Govert Verkes

April 2016

I want to apply for the In Pursuit of Disruption (IPOD) program in Silicon Valley in fall 2017. The program immediately appealed to me, and my background and future plans are very much in line with the IPOD program.

From a very young age I was very interested in both computer science and entrepreneurship. When I was 14 years old, I started my own internet company, in which I created software for modifying computer games. I used C++ and DirectX, an API for game programming, to extend existing games and players could use these modifications with a monthly subscription.

From then on I got more into programming as it allowed me to develop my own ideas. For example, I created a tutoring platform for high school students, that enabled students to connect to other high school or university students who would help them with all kinds of subjects. Currently, I am running a startup, together with 4 other artificial intelligence students. In this startup we provide artificial intelligence solutions for companies. We intentionally chose to consult other companies, because it allows us to explore the broad applications of artificial intelligence. Moreover, exploring several applications gives me new ideas and areas that interest me.

The startup scene in the Netherlands is still small, especially compared to the United States. An important reason for this is the Dutch investment climate, that is relatively conservative. Within the United States there are multiple areas with comprehensive startup scenes. I visited New York and Seattle, where I visited Google, eBay and a few tech startups. I enjoyed meeting the people at these places and experience their creativity, skills and entrepreneurial spirit. This makes me very curious about Silicon Valley, which has an even higher concentration of large tech-companies and startups, compared to for example New York. In addition to getting a feeling of the unique startup culture in Silicon Valley, it would be amazing to visit some of the largest tech-companies in the world and meet and learn from the people working there. I will be both looking forward to see the more established tech-startups and some of the newer startups.

My personal plan for the near future is to finish my graduate studies in artificial intelligence, and possibly pursue a PhD in the same field. More fundamentally, I want to develop my own idea or work together with others on an idea, over the course of my Masters and/or PhD. Pursuing a PhD appeals to me, because it provides me with a very different approach towards AI (mainly re-

search) compared to a entrepreneurial approach (mainly application), and thus I think they can be very helpful together.

I would really like to join the IPOD program, because I know there is very big chance that I will end up in the startup scene, and possibly even in Silicon Valley. I always had the plan to go to Silicon Valley, however following the IPOD program with organized site visits and talks will be much more interesting. Furthermore, I can meet people that will be valuable contacts for my future plans.

Thank you for considering my request, and I am looking forward to your reply.