

### Personal Statement

My parents' combined income as physicians in state-owned hospitals in Vietnam was far from sufficient to cover my tuition. However, I have obtained additional financial aid on top of Colby's generous assistance by consistently staying in the top 5% of my class since entering Colby and, more recently, being the highest-ranking student. I have also thoroughly enjoyed working as a teaching assistant, which further offsets costs and allows me to help other students academically and learn about how students' backgrounds can shape their academic performance.

As a Vietnamese international student amid the recent unprecedented chain of events, most REUs outside of Colby are beyond my reach. However, my interest in physics motivated me to utilize all resources available. I started research at Colby as early as my second semester, which developed into a summer project. Subsequently, with the research experience acquired at Colby, I became a strong candidate for non-REU internships elsewhere to broaden my experience. In 2019, although my Joint Quantum Institute internship was cut short due to a major delay in OPT processing, I proactively learned about my project before starting by communicating with members of the research group, and as a result the internship was successful. This summer, the pandemic caused the Institute for Quantum Computing and the Perimeter Institute to rescind their offers. To stay productive, I began the research for my Mathematics Honors Thesis and remained in contact with my advisor at Perimeter. Thus, I was well-prepared when the Perimeter program eventually restarted in May.

I have been incredibly fortunate because Colby has created an inclusive and encouraging environment where I could pursue my interest in physics. At MIT and beyond, I would like to do my part as a graduate student to emulate such an environment.

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