

### Personal Statement

My parents' combined income as physicians in state-owned hospitals in Vietnam was far from sufficient to cover my tuition. However, by consistently staying in the top 5% of my class since entering Colby and, more recently, being the highest-ranking student, I have obtained additional financial aid on top of Colby's generous assistance. 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 recent events, most REUs outside of Colby are beyond my reach. However, I utilized the resources available. I started research at Colby my second semester, which led to a summer project. Subsequently, I sought 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, 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.

Overcoming the barriers, while difficult, has enriched my life. I have been incredibly fortunate because Colby has created an 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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