Aid Letter (sent)

Good afternoon Paul,

I am Iñaki Arango, an international student from Argentina. We worked together on my financial aid appeal.

I am writing to you with a question. I was considering taking a gap year in view of the coronavirus situation, to prepare me better for my time at Rice, and to allow me to keep working in my startup. Before submitting the Gap Year Request Letter I wanted to know if the same financial aid considerations that were taken this year regarding my family’s ability to pay for my degree will be also taken next year.

I hope this email finds you well, and that you and your family are healthy and safe during these uncertain times.

Best regards,

Iñaki

Gap Year Letter

# Rev. 1

I was looking forward to being on campus in the Fall, but the current situation makes it very difficult to do so. The U.S. Embassy in Argentina is not giving out visas, and does not accept expedited appointment requests. That aside, we are in the 110th day of strict quarantine, without being allowed to leave our homes. Considering these circumstances and the rigorous health safety requirements for campus residents, I have decided to apply for a gap year.

During this gap year I will continue to pursue my education and professional development. I graduated from high school last December and since January, I’ve been working with a partner on a recycling startup called Recyco. We are creating a software platform that helps businesses track the performance of their recycling initiatives and manage their plastic supply chain while providing incentives to the general population to bring their plastics to dedicated treatment plants. We held meetings with prospective clients early on and prepared for a public launch in March but Covid struck and the ensuing quarantine forced us to postpone our plans. My original intent was to wrap up software development by mid year, leave the startup in my partner’s hands, and move to Houston. In the present situation, I have decided to take an active role in the management of the startup as we move into operations and to lead deployment with corporate clients. I believe this experience will be very valuable to becoming a technology entrepreneur.

In parallel, given that I cannot leave my house, I have been taking online courses in Software Architecture and Finance through edX and the Corporate Finance Institute to improve my understanding of the inner workings of companies and to help me operate my startup. Going forward I plan to take additional courses to explore fields that I might pursue at Rice. At the top of my list are Andrew Ng’s course in Machine Learning and Johns Hopkins’ eight-course Genomic Data Science Specialization.

To summarize, I believe this year will help me gain hands-on experience in managing a company and become a better entrepreneur. The courses I will be taking will help me to narrow down my interests and prepare me to make the best of my four years at Rice.

I look forward to your approval as I remain more committed than ever to becoming a member of the class of 2025.