Real Stories: 40 Successful Application Cases to G-School

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Chapter 1 Stephen Wang, New York University

Stephen Wang's Profile

Name	Wang, Stephen
Gender	Female
Undergraduate	BA, Department of Journalism, Fudan University, 1999
Scores	GRE: V620 Q790 A740, TOEFL 647, TWE: 4.0, GPA: 3.6
Employment	Business Reporter, an English language newspaper

Universities Applied	**Major**	**Degree**	**Result**
American University	Journalism	Master	Haft Aid
Columbia University	Journalism	Master	Waiting
Cornell University	Journalism	Master	
Georgetown University	Journalism	Master	Admission
George Washington University	Journalism	Master	
New York University	**Journalism**	**Master**	**Full Aid**
Northeastern University	Journalism	Master	Half Aid
Michigan State University	Journalism	Master	
Ohio State University	Journalism	Master	
Ohio University	Journalism	Master	Full Aid
Pennsylvania State University	Journalism	Master	Half Aid
Syracuse University	Journalism	Master	
University of Illinois, Urbana Champaign	Journalism	Master	
University of Pennsylvania	Journalism	Master	
University of Southern California	Journalism	Master	Admission

Interview with Stephen Wang

MicroEdu: Some said journalism-related majors are hard to apply to, but you succeeded. Some experiences?

Stephen Wang: I agree that applying to J-schools isn't an easy job, especially for Chinese students. Why? I think there are three major reasons:

First, journalism is, to some extent, an art of language, but we Chinese students are not native English speakers;

Second, accustomed to a Chinese journalism style, we find it hard to convince professors that we can write stories with a totally different western style;

Third, J-schools, with less donations compared to nature science departments, are often lean and mean and can't offer much financial aid, which, however, is what most of us would hope to count on when living abroad.

But, I'd like to say, all these difficulties would be dwarfed by just one thing, which is the applicant's hesitation or cowardice. If you feel a target would be very hard to reach even before you set off to do it, it will definitely be! You are scared by yourself and you would always find excuses to shrink back. Then the application would become increasingly hard!

Fortunately, I didn't realize all the difficulties when I started the application work. In fact, it demonstrates how badly I was doing the pre-application research work. I just wanted to go to the States to have a look and I knew J-schools there were open to international students. So I applied, tried my best, and won. I am happy I was never beaten down by myself.

MicroEdu: Many college students hope they can go abroad immediately after their graduation, but you chose to work and only after working for two years did you start to apply. Why were you so patient?

Stephen Wang: Journalism is more a professional training than a theoretical course. Textbooks alone would never let you know what it is really like to be a journalist. How to get an interviewee's trust to listen to his or her true feelings only five minutes after you two get to know each other? How to break the ice when you are interviewing very constrained people? How to ask questions that your interviewee would very likely be reluctant to answer? These are skills you could learn only through real reporting work. And only after you start to learn the skills, would you know what you lack but you might find in books. That is why I don't want to pursue a college-to-college journalism study. And now it's time for me to go back to school.

MicroEdu: How did your working experience help you in your application?

Stephen Wang: I believe my working experience is the strongest part in my application package, and it did help me a lot.

I was a business reporter for an English-language newspaper the past two years, writing stories on China's telecommunication market and the economic development of Shanghai's Pudong. China's telecom market is very active these years because it's experiencing an unprecedented reform. The formerly tightly controlled market is gradually opening to foreign investors. New players are joining together to create competition, and new game rules are being established. Reporting on this market helped me a lot to develop a sharp news mind and the ability to make deep and balanced analysis.

I sent several of my stories to J-schools as writing samples. I believe they played a key role in making quite a few of them admit me.

However, writing a sample is definitely not the most important thing that my job gave me. The most valuable gain through work, I believe, is my ability, or willingness, to communicate with others.

Maybe it's hard to imagine that I was a very shy girl when I had just graduated from college. I would get nervous even before making a phone interview, as if the interviewee at the other end of the telephone line would eat me up. But, now I will be the first one among a bunch of journalists to raise my hand for a chance to ask questions in a press conference. I will insist on getting the true facts if the interviewee wants to avoid my questions. I can make a speech in front of hundreds in an audience with a smile. All my self-confidence and courage came from my working experience!

Being a journalist, you'll have the chance to meet people from all walks of society. Whether your interviewee is an ordinary peasant or a president of a multinational company, you are equal to him just because you are a journalist. Neither haughty nor humble. That's what the job taught me, because all people are equal.

Personal Statement

I hope for a chance to do graduate study in the United States because it has the most independent and sophisticated mass media in the world. My ultimate goal is to apply what I learn to the industry in my own country, which is still immature but will surely become more developed.

My dream of becoming a journalist dates back to my childhood. Even as a youngster, I was curious about the world around me and I like freedom. I was attracted to the idea because a journalist can talk to people in all stations of life and be exposed to many ideas. As I grew older, the work attracted me even more as I realized journalists might be the people closest to the truth and reality. They play a vital role in helping others know the world in which they live and contribute to the enlightenment of society.

My dream came closer to fulfillment in 1995 when I graduated from middle school and enrolled in the Department of Journalism at Fudan University, ranked the best journalism school in China.

In the university, I accepted a Chinese-style journalism education. I was one of the school's top students in the four years I attended. I worked as an intern in five Chinese newspapers during vacations and was quite productive. China has a government controlled media and the press industry has a strict environment, but I can understand that since the government is facing a large population, it needs a unified media to make its voice clear.

After graduation, I made another step toward my dream by entering a newly launched newspaper, Shanghai Daily, which is so far the largest local English-language newspaper in China. I chose it because I wanted to polish my English, and more importantly, to practice what I had learned from reading western newspapers and magazines during my undergraduate study. I was deeply impressed by their balanced angles, their thorough research, and their courage to criticize.

During the past year I have been working as a business reporter at Shanghai Daily, covering the economic development of Pudong, a special finance and trade development area in Shanghai, and the telecom beat. The latter was fortuitous not only because China's telecom market has grown into the world's second largest, but also because it is experiencing a major reform, under which the former tightly controlled market is gradually opening to more competitors and even foreign investors. Covering this beat helped me a lot to develop the valuable skill of communicating with others.

This working experience has turned me from a shy girl into an open-minded reporter. I would even get nervous before making a telephone interview during the first months after I left campus, but now I will be the first among a group of journalists to raise my hand to ask questions during a press conference. At the same time, however, I became increasingly aware of my inadequacies. I need to further raise my English language level. I need to develop solid knowledge in a specific sector, such as finance or public affairs, so that I can become a real professional on my beat. That is why I decided to go back to school.

If I have a chance to enroll in your university, I will focus my study and research on the theories and practices of western journalism. What should be the nature of journalism? Can a news entity be totally free or is it inevitably beholden, controlled or influenced by a party, group or government. How should a news agency behave when its actions can hurt the nation's welfare? These are questions to which I will try to find answers.

I will try to learn a journalist's professional skills. Western journalists' sharp news sense, strong analytical capacity and their skills of interviewing and writing are things that I will try to develop.

I will also concentrate on the flourishing digital media, the Internet. The open, free and fast-refreshing Internet has become an unprecedented challenge to China's traditional media, although it's still in a fledgling stage, uncertain of its future. The Internet is obviously becoming one of the best-used news resources for the Chinese, even though the government bars non-official websites having their own reporters gathering information, thereby permitting rumors to occupy a big part of website contents.

I sincerely hope your university can provide me with the chance to study. Your sophisticated education and my own efforts will help me grow into an accomplished journalist.

Tell What You Thought Instead of What You Did

When I started to write this story, which was designed to tell some lessons I had gained from my application, I found there's so much I have learned that it's hard for me to tell it all. So, I decided to focus on one thing, which I summarized as the subject of this story, and believe is the most valuable skill I learned from the application.

By coming to this conclusion I am not saying what an applicant, especially an art applicant, has done is not important. If you have written and published a good dissertation or if you have taken part in significant social research and was awarded because of it, that is important, and it can make a great experience in your personal statement.

But you can bet that your PS will be more attractive and impressive if you tell more about your thoughts than about your deed. Say more about what had driven you to write that dissertation, what are your comments on that research, and how your ideas changed through those processes, rather than only elaborate on the titles of your essays and awards, and the details of your job in the research. That will definitely be a better way to show your value.

I can't remember clearly where I heard it, but I am really impressed with the following comparison: American universities enroll Chinese natural science students because professors there need assistants in their labs, while they admit Chinese social science students because professors there are eager to renovate the students' minds and assimilate them into western culture.

Let's put aside whether that's absolutely correct. At least in part the comparison demonstrates why it is important for social science students to expose their minds to professors.

I learned all this through my painful PS drafting process, during which I wrote two totally different versions. In the first one I wrote of my education since childhood, a list of the subjects of my essays and another list of my awards, and all my internships and working experiences, just like the writings of many model PS I had read. But after reading it through I could tell that it was not a good one-- no one could see what kind of a person 1 was in my heart, what I wanted to do and why, and what distinguished me from others. In a word, there's no point a school must admit me but not others.

So in the second version I didn't mention anything that can be seen from my resume and transcripts. I focused on my thoughts: why I love to became journalist, what had confused me in China's press industry, and what I really want to do after I learn western journalism styles, I'm proud of this version, and I believe it's the key factor in my success.

I think this is the big difference between social and natural science students. The value of natural science students can be seen from the experiments they did or the essays they wrote, while the value of social science students can be best known from their minds.

If there are other tips concerning how to express your thoughts better, my suggestion is tell about some changes in your opinions, ideas and thoughts. No one is expected to be 100 percent perfect, and every one makes mistakes. Telling others how you correct your mistakes and how you change your mind will be a great way to show you are growing and your willingness to make improvements.

And always focus on yourself. It's no use to deplore your parents' being laid off and your brother's being addicted to video games if what you want to do is to show yourself to others.

When I had a news writing course in the university, the professor taught us a good way to write a succinct news story lead. That is, imagine you are telling your grandmother the news that happened, how would you arrange your first sentence? I think it's the same when we write our PS. Expose your mind, and you can better demonstrate you are a special and unique person.

Chapter 2 Zhigang Zhang, University of Minnesota

Zhigang Zhang's Profile

Name	Zhang, Zhigang
Gender	Male
Graduate	MS, Biochemical Engineering, Tianjing University
Undergraduate	BS, Industrial Chemistry, Tianjing University
Scores	GRE: V530 Q800 A780, TOEFL: 603, TWE: 4.0, GPA: (G):86/100, (U):84/100
Employment	Institute of Microbiology, Chinese Academy of Science
Publications	Yes

Universities Applied	**Major**	**Degree**	**Result**
Cornell University	Biochemical Engineering	Ph.D.	
Drexel University	Biochemical Engineering	Ph.D.	Full Aid
Georgia Institute of Technology	Biochemical Engineering	Ph.D.	
Kansas State University	Biochemical Engineering	Ph.D.	
National University of Singapore	Biochemical Engineering	Ph.D.	Full Aid
North Carolina State University	Biochemical Engineering	Ph.D.	Full Aid
Ohio State University	Biochemical Engineering	Ph.D.	Waiting
Rice University	Biochemical Engineering	Ph.D.	
Texas A&M University	Biochemical Engineering	Ph.D.	Waiting
University of California, Riverside	Biochemical Engineering	Ph.D.	Waiting
University of Kentucky	Biochemical Engineering	Ph.D.	Full Aid
University of Maryland, Baltimore Country	Biochemical Engineering	Ph.D.	Full Aid
University of Maryland, College Park	Biochemical Engineering	Ph.D.	Full Aid
University of Minnesota, Twin Cities	**Biochemical Engineering**	**Ph.D.**	**Full Aid**
Wayne State University	Biochemical Engineering	Ph.D.	Waiting

Interview with Zhigang Zhang

MicroEdu: Congratulations, Zhigang! How many offers did you get altogether? Was it the happiest time while receiving offers one after another?

Zhigang: Thank you. Totally I received seven offers, including one from The National University of Singapore. I was so excited when I received the first offer from The University of Maryland, Baltimore County that I rode my bike to the Tiananmen Square from Zhongguancun that night to celebrate my success. Following it, I received another two offers in a row, including one from the University of Minnesota, Twin Cities, which I finally decided to accept. I applied for these two schools, both without application fee and official GRE and TOEFL score reports. So, I wrote to MicroEdu and attributed it to the success of MicroEdu Application Philosophy. After getting the three offers, I began to remain quiet to think and prepare for my next step.

MicroEdu: Thank you for sharing your exhilaration on your first offer. It will be an unforgettable memory not only for you, but also for some of us at MicroEdu, as we know you so well. Do you still recall the very first email you sent to MicroEdu?

Zhigang: Frankly, I could not recall my very first email to MicroEdu. I think it must be related with tests or scores since I was preparing for GRE at that time. As most applicants assumed, I believed GRE was very critical to distinguish myself from the large and competitive applicant pool. Though I liked MicroEdu very much and read it everyday, I rarely posted messages and chatted there because I wanted to save time and energy for cracking GRE.

In my expectation, my GRE score was really bad, though reasonably good in Jinbo's opinion. I was extremely anxious for my upcoming application with this low score, especially verbal 530.

MicroEdu: Exactly! I have a deep impression on your first email because it was among the first few I handled when I joined the MicroEdu Team. I could see that you were excellent from your introduction despite all the anxieties in your email.

You asked whether it would be necessary to retake GRE. Did you retake it? Was it a significant increase?

Zhigang: I did take a second GRE in April, a few days ahead of my TOEFL test in May. I didn't review much for the second try. I believed I could get a better score. But the result of the 2nd GRE is 180 lower than the first one (2110).

Though I read many MicroEdu articles on applying to study abroad, I was still badly influenced by Chinese examination-oriented admission strategy: scores are the most important. And taking exams is the thing we know how to do best. So I planned to retake GRE. But at the same time, I began to post messages in Forum and chatted in MicroEdu. Soon, I saw that my writing had improved a lot, which was critical for me to communicate with the Admissions Committees.

MicroEdu: So knowing something is easy and acting on the knowledge is difficult. That is why you took GRE again, right?

Zhigang: That is very true! In fact, I think a lot of MicroEdu Members know what is the right thing to do, but only a few of them really do what is right.

MicroEdu: Chemical Engineering at University of Minnesota ranks third according to US News and Report. And its average verbal score of enrolled students is close to 550. How did you manage to get an offer?

Zhigang: In my opinion, two factors are very critical to secure an offer. One is a quality PS. It should demonstrate your understanding of your research interests, as well as your creativity, demonstrated academic potential and credentials. It should be written like a scientific paper, not a story, at least for Science and Technology majors. Reviewers, those faculty members, can identify whether you have a clear picture for what you will study.

Another factor is to try to meet the faculty members in person. There are some international conferences or seminars held in China every year. Your strong communication skills would impress the professors on the spot. If you have the same research interest, maybe he or she would seriously consider you and give you personal help later on admissions.

MicroEdu: Did you have such chances of meeting professors in person on international conferences? If you did, please let us hear about it.

Zhigang: I tried to contact professors via emails but it was not that effective. But I was informed that the 3rd China/USA Joint Chemical Engineering Conference would be held here in Beijing September 2000 by the Conference.

I participated in the opening ceremony, dinner, and seminars throughout the Conference. I talked to several professors about some interested areas and my application. Two of them encouraged me to apply to their departments. One would like to submit the application fee on my behalf (he is a director of Graduate Studies.) Three professors read my PS and gave me general comments.

Finally, University of Minnesota and University of Kentucky admitted me without application fee and official GRE and TOEFL scores. This is a strong example for the importance of face-to-face communication.

MicroEdu: That's convincing! Do you have an example to illustrate the importance of PS?

Zhigang: Yes, I have another success case to certify the importance of PS. Even if you have not had the opportunity to meet the professors, you can still be unique: explore the school deeply and exploit what you have learned. The result should be a targeted PS, which is what the professors are looking for.

I pre-applied for North Carolina State University online last October but was simply rejected. They made the decision according to my average scores and background. However, I researched the School and found it very suitable with my current research projects. It was interdisciplinary and I had the requirements.

I seriously applied there last November without application fee and official GRE/TOEFL score reports. I didn't contact Professor Kelly, who was my target. In early April 2001, I received the offer from NCSU.

MicroEdu: When did you decide to apply in spite of an "unsatisfactory" GRE? Were you confident from the very beginning?

Zhigang: I decided to apply to study abroad shortly after I came here to Beijing in fall 2000. In fact, I had to accept the MicroEdu Application Strategy when I had the "bad" scores.

Throughout the examination period, which lasted nearly one year, I was not confident at all. Anyway, I had to work full-time and endured some aches. (I am now fine).

But what gave me confidence was MicroEdu, which also took much of my spare time that should have set aside for preparing for tests. With better and better English, I could write and talk freely. I began to like English as a communication tool.

MicroEdu: What is your current research project? How does your research meet those requirements of NCSU?

Zhigang: My research here is extremophiles biotechnology. Extremophiles are a kind of microbe, which thrive in harsh environments, such as soda lakes, hot springs, deserts, and ocean bed. They could give me some hints for life origin and evolution. Also they have great and unique potential in industrial applications. It is a cross-disciplinary, which needs the expertise on microbiology, chemical engineering, molecular biology, and chemistry.

Incidentally, I have all the background they claimed I should have. I read several papers of Professor Kelly and wrote the PS according to his research group.

MicroEdu: When did you grow interest in biotechnology?

Zhigang: In my junior study in Tianjin University, I began to take the Biochemical Engineering minor courses after I had the field trip to Huabei Pharmaceuticals Co. in summer 1995. Biotechnology is emerging as a new frontier and promising industry.

As MicroEdu suggests, thinking should be done throughout the application process. Only through thinking could we know our current situation and how to prepare for the next step. We don't need a very big caliber gun to shoot a bird. We just need to shoot it accurately.

MicroEdu: So you refer the caliber and bird to an article at MicroEdu, right? The bird is the school or school application. Indeed, we believe applying to US schools is easy and everybody can go if given the right understanding and methods. How did you prepare your recommendation letters?

Zhigang: I had contacted the professors who would like to help me as early as last summer break. I showed them my plan and resume, and asked for their advice.

Professors would like to give you some suggestions on schools, and on the way of your presenting when they sign the letter for you. One of my references was from the Dean of School of Chemical Engineering and Technology, Tianjin University. We kept close contact in and out of TJU. He suggested me to apply to the schools that have collaborative programs with the Chemical Department of Tianjin University.

Hopefully, the three reference letters, combined with your PS, will demonstrate your caliber in teamwork ability, academic achievements, research and other potentials. Try to outline a unique and unifying picture of yourself and explain it to your references. They will think highly of you.

MicroEdu: Did you start to research on extremophiles biotech after you worked in CAS?

Zhigang: Yes. My BS and MS in Tianjin University was concerned about Industrial Chemistry and Biochemical Engineering. I had to learn some knowledge of microbiology and biotechnology. My job here is in applied research, not basic research, though. The wide exposure to new knowledge gave me motivations and attractions to learn something in other areas. The basic research here gave me some good training on developing an artistic vision, which is critical for discoveries and invention.

MicroEdu: What are some of the applications of Biotechnology? Have you decided on your future research interest at University of Minnesota?

Zhigang: Biotechnology applies to industrial production, environmental protection, medicine and health care, agriculture, food, and so on. Biotechnology has the advantage of being versatile, productive and environmentally benign. It is the next Big Thing as TIME predicts. Maybe we could use Biochips as CPU later to upgrade our computers. Thus, we would have astonishing stores and speeds. You don't need to worry about your connections.
My future research would still be in biochemical engineering, metabolic engineering and genomic biochemical engineering. Its purpose is to manipulate the microbes or cells quantitatively to carry out some functions. Within the cell, it is also a complicated and interactive network. We need a good command of math and artistic analogy to fulfill the tasks. I need to learn more about it. We need to know how the components of the cell communicate to let them serve us. It must be exciting and rewarding.

MicroEdu: You have participated in some key projects at the Institute of Microbiology, CAS.

I suppose the institute to be the most advanced and authoritative institute in China. Why do you still want a PhD degree from the US?

Zhigang: I hope I could do something meaningful in this area after I have received the PhD there. Yeah, The Institute of Microbiology, CAS is good in China in microbiology research. But it is still behind peers abroad. Also I want to do the research later in biochemical engineering, which is the application of chemical engineering principles and practical skills in the biological systems. I do want to strengthen my quantitative skills in biology. I plan to pursue a PhD in the Chemical Engineering Department, which would surely benefit me later when I return to Biotechnology.

MicroEdu: What will be your plan upon graduation?

Zhigang: I don't think I have the immigration tendency, (smile) After 4 years of study, I would like to work in a US company a couple of years to strengthen my practical, communication and management skills. Then I would like to come back to be a professor, and set up my own research group. If possible, I would construct my own high-tech company focusing on bringing our discoveries and inventions out of laboratories to market, to serve the people. Also, I'd like to write some popular science fiction when I am old.

MicroEdu: How will you summarize the whole application process, Zhigang?

Zhigang: The application is a process of thinking, researching and acting. Also it is a process of the art of waiting. Most of your time after sending application packages is simply waiting for the results. This gives me chances to think again. Anyway, the success is just a new start. I have to go ahead and work harder to fulfill my plan with quiet optimism and reserved confidence strengthened by the application process.

MicroEdu: Think and think again is very close to MicroEdu application guide. Do you think your success is a proof of MicroEdu's Philosophy? Or you have acquired new Philosophy?

Zhigang: Definitely, I attribute my success to MicroEdu's Application Philosophy.

MicroEdu: Thank you! What will you say to the fellow applicants of Chemical Engineering?

Zhigang: Communication skills are of the same importance to Chemical Engineering applicants as to MBA or other major applicants. Try to improve your English right now!

MicroEdu: Thank you, Zhigang! What you said will greatly help not only future applicants of chemical engineering but also almost all the other majors, especially those of science and engineering. I wish you very best in you future study, research and career. I hope that someday we can read your science fiction. You may then publish them at the MicroEdu site if you would like.

Statement of Purpose

As an intern in the fermentation department of Huabei Pharmaceuticals Company at Shijiazhuang, China in the summer of 1995, I was impressed by how the pennicillium could produce antibiotic penicillin and therefore, I wanted to learn more about the "cell factory," which is mighty, renewable and environmentally benign.

During my undergraduate study at Tianjin University, China, I focused my efforts on the fundamentals and methodologies of industrial chemistry and chemical engineering, especially in analysis as well as synthesis of chemical processes using mathematics and computers. Also, I studied a minor in Biochemical Engineering to enhance my understanding on how to most effectively use the remarkable microbes in finding novel and efficient biological alternatives to old chemical engineering problems, when I came back from Huabei Pharmaceuticals Company. The independent and productive research in immobilized Aspergillus Oryzae cells convinced me to seriously consider biochemical engineering as my career goal.

Inspired by seminars in applied and environmental microbiology, biotechnology and bioengineering, I was compelled to further my academic adventures in biochemical engineering.
My graduate thesis research focused on the batch fermentation of beta-mannanase and manno-oligosaccharides preparation in the laboratory and pilot plant scale, collaborating with Professor Wenbo Yang from Nankai University and the Bohai Chemical Industrial Group. Taking part in this project from conception to market, I concentrated my efforts on the design, control and scale-up of the fermentor and bioprocessing from the industrial perspective. I designed a set of tailor-made impellers, which was applicable and efficient for the distinctive rheology of the fermentation media with 3.0% konjac powder. I am proud of the kinetic model I set up to simulate and predict beta-mannanase batch fermentation. By means of Genetic Algorithms, the simulation results gave me valuable insight to further explore and exploit the potentials from Bacillus licheniforms NK-27. Through collaborating with people coming from academia and industry, my teamwork ability and the efficiency in real problem solving with critical thinking was greatly enhanced. But I also found that I needed advanced training in upstream bioproccssing, such as isolation, selection and bioengineering bacteria with industrial and/or environment importance to tackle big problems by recombinant DNA technology.

Upon earning my Master's degree last year, I went to the Division of Extremophiles and Extremozmes Biotechnology, Institute of Microbiology, Chinese Academy of Sciences and started working on two national key projects. By extending the chemical engineering paradigm of transport, kinetics and modeling to microbiology systems, I successfully employed the engineering concepts and approaches of integration, quantitafion and relevance in the optimization and scale-up of Alginate lyase fermentation by Alkaliphilic Bacillus N19-2. The fermentation enzyme activity increased 5-fold compared with it under initial conditions and the enzyme activity in a 2L fermentor kept as high as, and even higher than, the one in the shaken flask. Also, I learned a lot of experimental skills in molecular cellular biology by participating in cu~ing-edge research in the physiology and enzymology of extreme thermophiles and helping younger graduate students

with my boundless energy. Through reading scholarly books and up-to-date journals, running scientific experiments, analyzing data, writing research papers, participating in making academic decisions, my ability to innovate and conduct scientific research has improved significantly. I have published an original paper, co-authored two book chapters and applied for the patent (refer to my Resume) within two years.

With my prior enthusiasm and strong commitment to research, multifold research experience and interdisciplinary background in chemistry, bio/chemical engineering and microbiology, I am confident that I have prepared myself well for my upcoming PhD study and research in NC State University. I am very much attracted to your graduate program because:

1) Biochemical Engineering and Technology with emphasis in metabolic analysis and molecular characterization is highlighted in your Chemical Engineering graduate program, which is very compatible with my background and research interest. I can get started as soon as possible on my career path while I am working on my degree.

2) Rarely does any other graduate program so stress creativity, leadership and excellence, which fit my innovative and ambitious nature, and career goal extremely well.

3) Pursuing the PhD in such a large, diverse institution as NC State University would offer me valuable opportunities to do collaboration work and improve my communication skills, which suits my multidisciplinary and diverse orientation well.

4) The concentration of industrial and R&D opportunities in the Research Triangle Park could provide me opportunities for summer internship, co-op position or collaboration project and therefore, put what I learn in the classroom to practical use in the workplace immediately.

If admitted, I would like to concentrate my PhD studies in the areas of Biochemical and Process Engineering, Hyperthermophiles Biotechnology and Enzyme Characterization, Metabolic and Protein Engineering, Bioseparations, and Environmental Biotechnology. The common thread through my diverse research interests is to quantitatively re-understand and re-construct chemical processing and production via inspirations from the analogs of chemical industrial and engineering practices with biological systems.

A cell could be simple, but it has a huge variety of biochemical talents. By manipulating and controlling the cell itself, as well as the environment in which it functions with my unlimited curiosity and innovation, I could be rewarded with discoveries of new products and processes, even breakthroughs, in these promising areas. Since Biochemical Engineering research in China is still in its initial stage, I plan to lead my own work team at my own "cell factory" research center later and undoubtedly, contribute to the emerging bioeconomy boom in the new century.

Reference Letter #1

Dear Sir or Madam,

It is my honor to recommend Mr. Zhigang Zhang to your graduate program. I first got to know Mr. Zhang at the annual conference for recruiting new employees last spring. I recruited him to our department because of his quantitative perspective and critical vision, which impressed me immediately, on industrial production of Extremozymes and Oligosaccharides.

Through daily communications and discussions on our research project, I find that Mr. Zhang is very diligent and self-motivated in research work. Keeping an open and active mind, he keeps himself well informed with every break-through in bioscience and biotechnolog): Just for an example: In CAS Symposium on Glycoscience and Glycotechnology this August, he challenged speakers by pointing out their potential hurdles and offering his alternative strategies for preventing virus adhesion by chemically modified oligosaccharides.

As a newcomer to our research group, he has demonstrated a great capacity and adaptability in scientific research. His strong engineering background, especially in quantitative analysis, bioprocess design and scale-up, contributed impressively to the laboratory and industrial R&D of our two novel bioproducts: Alkaline alginate lyase and Alginate oligosaccharides.
Mr. Zhang is very good at technical writing both in Chinese and in English. He has co-authored two book chapters, papers, and applied the patent, with my colleague, Professor (name). His spoken English is also very good. He can fluently discuss our research program in English with visiting scholars from Japan, Europe and the US. To my knowledge, he didn't score in standard tests as well as his real English skills. Therefore, I don't think he will have any language problem in graduate study.

Mr. Zhang is an active member of Chinese Society for Microbiology and often volunteers his help such as delivering monthly Newsletters and preparing for the seminars. He is smart and ambitious. By acquiring acute insights from lab work and seminars, he seeks self-improvements both in personality and scholarship persistendy. With his diverse background and experiences, he does not simply take the routine job, but weaves his expertise and skills together into a framework for his lifelong career objective, R&D in Biochemical Engineering, exploring and exploiting the potential of the microbial resources in the chemical, environmental and medical areas, etc.

As Department Head, I understand and respect his genuine interests and strong commitment to further study and research in your esteemed institution. His performance in my research institute demonstrates that he has well prepared for his quest for academic achievements of the highest order. Without reservation, I give my highest recommendations for him to your Ph.D. program. I am confident that Mr. Zhang will add diversity and uniqueness to your academic community.

Sincerely yours,

Professor (name)

Reference Letter #2

To whom it may concern:

It is my great pleasure to recommend Mr. Zhigang ZHANG, one of my former postgraduate students, who is applying to enroll in your Department for further study.

Graduated from the Department of Chemical Engineering of Tianjin University in 1996, Mr. Zhang became a M.S. candidate under my supervision. His course study and thesis research were very successful which led him to be successfully authored an M.S. degree in 1999. Later he got a job, as a research associate, in the Institute of Microbiology, Chinese Academy of Sciences. When he worked in my laboratory, I was impressed with his dedication to academic pursuit and commitment to scientific research. He joined the project of an industrial R&D of beta-mannanase and manno-oligosaccharides. It was a challenging task, involving the fundamentals and experimental skills from microbiology, biochemical engineering and process design. He offered his unique insights into several key problems relating to the scale-up of liquid submerged fermentation and konjac powder hydrolysis. He could make every implicit assumption and every weakness, point out potential hurdles, and offer unique solutions or perspectives.

During a three-year period of studying and working with me, Mr. Zhang has given me a very deep impression of his intelligence, hard work and creativity. He is honest and conscientious, and reports his research progress accurately. His communication skills and cooperation capacity improved after he actively participated in and contributed to the collaboration project and our intellectual community. I can confirm that he is one of the excellent students I have directed. I believe that his academic record, research experiences, and incomparable traits make him the outgoing, accomplished and promising Ph.D. candidate that your Department is looking for. I highly recommend him to you, and will be pleased to provide any further information upon your request. Thank you!

Sincerely yours,

Professor (name)

My Understanding of The MicroEdu Application Philosophy

As soon as I graduated from Tianjin University in the summer of 1999, I got a job as a research associate in the Institute of Microbiology, Chinese Academy of Sciences, Beijing. From then on, I embarked on the journey to studying abroad from scratch. Now my dream has come true. Looking back, I have to say that it is the MicroEdu Application Philosophy (BAP) that guided me to grow and succeed.

In my opinion, BAP could be summarized as 1) Think, 2) Research, and 3) Act.

"Think, think and think again" is probably the most powerful point promoted by MicroEdu. The first thing we should do in application is to think, as the MicroEdu 9-Step Guide to Successful Application suggests. Not only for the application, in fact, we should also think carefully and thoroughly before we make any decision and make the next move. Through thinking, we could know why it is worthwhile going abroad: to expand our horizon, improve our communication skills, be armed with the state-of-the-art expertise, learn to survive, sustain and succeed in a completely new environment, etc. Through thinking, we could know who we are, such as our career goal, our educational objectives, and our advantages and disadvantages in our applications. Call this process a brainstorming process, something unfamiliar to the Chinese and even painful, as we have little experience in thinking about who we are and what we want to do. If we truly understand the MicroEdu 9-step Guide, we know that having a clear picture of ourselves as well as our targets is the base, the starting point, to have a successful application and to have a strong self-confidence. Only with that understanding can we start talking about application strategies, personal positioning, and being smart in our own way.

Secondly, research. In the MicroEdu article "Save Time, Energy, and Money" there is a rule called "Rule 2: Do your homework." This is a critical process for a successful application. The more we know, the more accurately we can shoot at our target. The best way to research schools is to surf school websites.

I began to browse the universities' homepages since fall of 1999 while I was preparing for GRE and TOEFL. Certainly, there are many criteria you could follow to choose your schools. Using school ranking as a criterion is probably used most by Chinese. However, whether the professors research areas match your background and interests does count more. With careful research, you would know how to write a Personal Statement convincingly and logically; what kind of academic - experiences you should emphasize; how to relate your achievement with your interest and career plan; what sort of image you would like to exhibit to the admissions committee; and so on. It is helpful to learn some insider news from the students studying there. For example, some universities would like to admit Chemical Engineering applicants from Tianjin University. The University of Minnesota Chemical Engineering graduate program only accepts GRE scores within two years.

According to my experience, even though I know all the MicroEdu tips of how to be successful in

application and study, it was still hard for me to make changes in my actions. But fortunately, I did change!

This is what I have done. MicroEdu convincingly demonstrates that communication skill is probably the most important factor in determining one's success in application and study in the US. I started practicing my reading and writing skills in the MicroEdu website. I posted many messages at the MicroEdu Forum, for a while, I went to the MicroEdu Chat Room everyday. I was no longer afraid of losing face through interacting with others in English. Soon, my written English improved greatly. And writing in English became easy and smooth.

That kind of online courage and English skills soon enabled me to be bold and capable in an offline environment. I think that the University of Minnesota accepting me into its highly competitive Chemical Engineering program is partly due to the impressive image I gave to the Department head when we met in person at the 3rd Joint China/US Chem. conference held in Beijing in fall 2000. In fact, we talked no more than 10 minutes during the coffee break!

Luckily, for the coming applicants, you will be well guided by the MicroEdu 9-step Guide and the MicroEdu Monthly Plan to facilitate your application. Try to analyze yourself and make the smart decision in your case! But remember, knowledge is never enough; actions are always more convincing and useful than words! So, do it!

In short, BAP is really a treasure for us who were nurtured by China's examination-oriented education system. It is also versatile. I have helped one of my classmates successfully get a job offer from BP Inc. by using the same philosophy. Now I am curious whether the BAP is applicable to securing love.

Chapter 3 Henry, Carnegie Mellon University

Henry's Profile

Name	Henry
Gender	Male
Undergraduate	BE, Computer Science and Technology, Tsinghua University, 2001
Scores	GRE: V680, Q800, A800; TOEFL: 643; TWE: 5.0; GPA 88/100
Publications	NO

Universities Applied	**Major**	**Degree**	**Result**
Brown University	Computer Science		
California Institute of Technology	Computer Science		
Carnegie Mellon University	**Knowledge Discovery & Data Mining**	**Master**	**Fellowship**
Columbia University	Information Networking	Master	Admission
Cornell University	Computer Science	Master	Admission
Duke University	Computer Science	Master	Admission
Georgia Institute of Technology	Computer Science		
Harvard University	Computer Science		
Johns Hopkins University	Computer Science		
Massachusetts Institute of Technology	Computer Science		
Princeton University	Computer Science		
Purdue University, West Lafayette	Computer Science		
Rice University	Computer Science		
Stanford University	Computer Science		
University of California, Berkeley	Computer Science		
University of California, Los Angeles	Computer Science		
University of Illinois, Urbana Champaign	Computer Science	Master	TA
University of Maryland, College Park	Computer Science		
University of Michigan, Ann Arbor	Computer Science	Ph.D.	RA
University of Pennsylvania	Computer Science		
University of Southern California	Computer Science	Ph.D.	Admission
University of Texas, Austin	Computer Science		
University of Wisconsin-Madison	Computer Science		
Yale University	Computer Science		

Interview with Henry

MicroEdu: It is said, "Every smart 18-year-old in the world wants to come to Carnegie Mellon, and every company in the New Economy wants to hire them." Henry, you were admitted to both of the masters programs for which you applied at CMU! What are the two programs? Can you tell us why Carnegie Mellon attracts you?

Henry: The two masters programs are: M.S. in Knowledge Discovery and Data Mining and M. S. in Information Networking. The former one offered me financial aid and I accepted it. The later one is admission only.

The School of Computer Science at Carnegie Mellon is at the leading position in the States. I like its comprehensiveness and good reputation. To tell the truth, I hadn't expected that I would get accepted and offered full financial aid by one of its Master's programs. So, I hadn't thought too much about it before I accepted CMU's offer and declined all other schools.

Why does Carnegie Mellon attract me? I can only say that Carnegie Mellon is definitely a "big bull" in IT industry, and since it is nearly impossible for the Mainland Chinese students, who majored in CS, to get offers from MIT, Stanford or UC -Berkeley, and where there probably are great programs in Computer Science too, Carnegie Mellon comes out to be the best choice.

MicroEdu: So the offer from CMU was somewhat unexpected. How did you evaluate yourself during the application; your strength and weakness? Why, do you think, they granted you an offer?

Henry: Well, you mentioned "strength", the word seemed too powerful to me. I think the most important thing in my application is "balance." My GPA, GRE, TOEFL and all other supporting materials showed a good balance; no obvious weak points, but also no distinct advantages. That is also my shortcoming. All mv records showed that I am a good student, but far from an excellent future researcher. I tried TSE, but only got a score of 45. So the attempt to make myself more competitive was unsuccessful, because as you know, only a score over 50 is considered acceptable by American graduate schools.

The offer from CMU was really an excellent one: truly promising specialty, first rate professors and facilities, super high professor-to-student ratio in our center, and a perfect curriculum plan. However, it is also a program that requires hard work. The math foundation it requires is terribly high because data mining is strongly related to statistics. This is a big headache for CS major students. Anyway, I will try my best.
The reason why they granted the offer to me is not a question I am able to answer. It may be because CMU considers more about a student's balance. That is the only conclusion I can make.

MicroEdu: How did you select schools during application? Are all the programs you applied to top ones?

Henry: Oh, the method I used is simple enough, mainly according to the rankings published by US News. I applied to 24 graduate schools according to the top 25 schools in CS Rankings and the top 20 schools in CE Rankings.

MicroEdu: I see that you are a confident applicant. Why did you choose Knowledge Discovery and Data Mining rather than AI, software engineering or human computer Interaction? What is the application of data mining?

Henry: In fact, choosing KDD is a coincidence or it can be called an accident. The first semester of a college senior is the busiest and when I had to deal with heavy learning tasks while also applying to U.S. graduate schools. Actually I would like to have applied to database programs or networks, but I didn't have much time for browsing those web pages carefully. I saw there was a word "data" in the introduction of KDD program, so I assumed that it was data based.

Now I understand that data mining is really a good choice. Its application is so wide. The mission of KDD is to develop new computer methods that use historical data to improve future decisions. Examples include analyzing past medical records to identify future high-risk patients, analyzing past financial transactions to identify future fraud, analyzing past customer purchase records to predict future purchase behavior, etc.

MicroEdu: That is a fortunate accident. So what is your plan once you get the Master's degree?

Henry: It seems fortunate, but the program requires hard work, since its math requirements are so high. Well, I haven't had a detailed plan in mind yet - there will still be two years to go, everything can change a great deal.

MicroEdu: I agree that people redefine their goals from time to time. So you will possibly go on for a Ph.D. education or possibly start your career in any KDD applied industry, right? What are some of your formal schoolmates doing after graduating from an American university?

Henry: I hear that most of them go to American companies, usually, high-tech companies. There are still a number of them pursuing another degree.

MicroEdu: Do you have an idea on the prospective of Chinese Computer Science students in the job market in the US?

Henry: I think the overall prospective is good, though the US economy is in a valley recently. Because Computer Science related applications cover almost every area in society, a Chinese CS student will always find a good position if he is able to get a degree from a US graduate school.

MicroEdu: Earlier, you said data mining is challenging to CS students, as it requires strong

knowledge in statistics. But some say Chinese students are, on the average, better in math than the US students. Is this true?

Henry: In general, Chinese students seem to be better at math than the US students. But, the US students enjoy much more freedom when studying; therefore a US student is able to develop different interests within study, while most Chinese students, would only spend their time on many courses. Thus, if a US student is interested in math, he is able to devote most of his time to math without being too worried about other subjects and so becomes very good at it. What is more, the program I am going to enter is so international that most of the students come from countries other than the US.

MicroEdu: When and how did you develop an interest in Computer Science? Also, you seem to have several hobbies. Can you tell us a bit about them?

Henry: I think I was in primary school when "Apple" and personal computers first appeared in China. I considered the computer a very mysterious machine and became more and more interested in it. I also have a variety of hobbies, such as tennis, swimming, music, films, etc. I have studied Japanese for 3 years but probably won't have a chance to use it in the US.

MicroEdu: It is almost an accepted fact that applicants from Tsinghua University have preference over applicants from other universities. Do you understand it? What qualities make them widely welcomed?

Henry: Actually, US graduate schools well understand the Chinese College Entrance Examinations. They know that most of the students in famous Chinese colleges are intelligent, at least in the area of studying. For Tsinghua, because so many senior graduates are now studying or have studied in the US and their achievements are great, new applicants from Tsinghua receive more attention. I think it is the most important factor.

MicroEdu: So, if students from other universities distinguish themselves by excellent performances, someday they will win a good reputation for their old school. What do you wish to say to other students who wish to study Computer Science in the US?

Henry: Know yourself better before applying and find the most appropriate schools to apply to. Also, specialty selection is rather crucial. Wish all new applicants good luck!

MicroEdu: Thank you. Henry! Hope you can bring us more insights in another couple of years after you attend CMU.

Statement of Purpose

Having studied for four years in Tsinghua University has made me fully aware that computer science and technology will dominate the coming century. I love this area and have already set a goal to have a career in the IT industry. I understand that a perfect environment is vital for final success: notable faculty, good students, first-rate facilities, and easy access to the latest information. That is why I choose CMU to pursue a M.S. degree. I have a wide variety of interests in this field, such as Networks, Hardware Design and CAD, but I would like to focus on Data Mining research in my graduate studies.

I was born in one of the most beautiful cities in China. Before senior high school, I led an easy and happy life with most of my spare time playing with friends. Then after an entrance exam, I entered (name), one of the top 10 high schools in China. Unlike most of my classmates, who usually buried their heads in exercises to prepare for all kinds of academic competitions, I chose a different course which I believed had a much greater value. I understood the Japanese language would be a more useful tool than the academic competitions, since Japan is an advanced neighboring country. So I studied Japanese during my spare time for three years, and I have learned to speak it nearly fluently. When I graduated from high school, I was ranked number one in a class of more than four hundred students, and as a result, I was the only candidate recommended by my school to take the very selective prior entrance exam given by Tsinghua University. I received an excellent grade, and was accepted into the Department of Computer Science and Technology in Tsinghua University.

I knew that computer science called for a strong background of fundamental knowledge, so I paid special attention to mathematical and computer science core courses. I excelled in these courses, while also maintaining very high standards in other non-computer related areas. My practical ability is well developed, as I am proficient in both programming, and in hardware design and implementation. Thus my research interests are not confined to one field, and I believe my ability to adapt will allow me a great deal of flexibility in the future.

This background helped me obtain a summer internship and allowed me to contribute to a research project being conducted by Professor (name)'s department. Under Professor (name) guidance, I participated in demand analysis and database design for Enterprise Resource Planning of Tsinghua Tongfang. I also designed a whole frame of a multi-layered e-commerce module corresponding to the project and implemented it in record time. This research project has helped me understand database design and networks beyond what one can learn in the classroom, and has given me much more real world hands-on experience.

In order to broaden my horizons beyond the scope of Computer Science, I have taken an active role in many extracurricular activities. I have enjoyed serving in both the military band and student union of Tsinghua University. As a member of the band, I found it rewarding to work with others, especially when performing for fellow students. As a member of the student union, I organized a professional development series, where students were given the oppommity to meet

with working professionals in the business world. I have also taken an active part in many sports activities, such as tennis, my favorite sport, which I play every two or three days. This has given me both energy and strength, helping me focus more clearly on my goals.

I believe I am fully prepared to begin the life of a graduate student and I would like to devote myself to the study of computer science. I have set three objectives for my graduate period: to make a thorough study of Data Mining research, to expand my knowledge in other CS related areas, and to make meaningful and influential innovations in my career. Will you help me fulfiU these goals?

Chapter 4 Yang Chen, Ohio State University

Yang Chen's Profile

Name	Chen, Yang
Gender	Male
Undergraduate	BS, Environmental Science, Peking University, 2001
Scores	GRE: V660, Q800, A770; TOEFL: 653; TWE: 4.0; GPA 3.7
Publications	No

Universities Applied	**Major**	**Degree**	**Result**
Boston University	Environmental Science	Ph.D.	
California Institute of Technology	Environmental Science	Ph.D.	
City University of New York	Environmental Science	Ph.D.	Admission
Columbia University	Environmental Science	Ph.D.	
Cornell University	Environmental Science	Ph.D.	
Duke University	Environmental Science	Ph.D.	Admission
Indiana University	Environmental Science	Ph.D.	
Northwestern University	Environmental Science	Ph.D.	
Ohio State University	**Environmental Science**	**Ph.D.**	**Fellowship**
Pennsylvania State University	Environmental Science	Ph.D.	
University of California, Berkeley	Environmental Science	Ph.D.	
University of California, Davis	Environmental Science	Ph.D.	
University of California, Santa Barbara	Environmental Science	Ph.D.	
University of Florida	Environmental Science	Ph.D.	Admission
University of Illinois, Urbana Champaign	Environmental Science	Ph.D.	Admission

Interview with Yang Chen

MicroEdu: Chen Yang, your major is Environmental Science. Are you studying the types of things often seen on National Geographic and the Discovery Channel TV programs?

Chen Yang: You are right. These programs are my favorites. Scientifically speaking, Environmental Science is multidisciplinary, including environmental chemistry, environmental law, environmental economics, Ecology and etc. I think I am lucky to be able to find what I truly love in this vast field.

MicroEdu: What specific fields do you enjoy the most?

Chen Yang: Ecology. Every year my advisor, a famous ecologist will routinely lead us to either large lakes or high mountains to investigate the natural conditions there. Last summer, he took us to Wuhan (East Lake), Anqing and Lushan, and then we spent almost a whole month at Changbai Mountain. I have to admit that fieldwork is really hard, but the beautiful scenery can make me completely oblivious to the hardship!

As I said in my application essay: "I hate to be confined in four walls all day, which borders on claustrophobia." I love Nature. Two of my hobbies are raising pets and travel. This major can be "just what the doctor ordered."

MicroEdu: You are so lucky to be able to study something that combines travel and fieldwork. Have you had any unforgettable experiences in your fieldwork?

Chen Yang: The mosquitoes in Changbai Mountain are the most voracious ones I have ever met in my life! When I stepped into the forest, they came on me in throngs, like vampires. I always regret that I did not take a picture of myself then - I had to put on thick gloves, clothes, and a shawl…and it was summer! I looked like an old Arab woman! However, the mosquitoes' long proboscises were still able to penetrate my covering! But I had to finish my task. When I came out of the forest, I looked like a toad with countless swellings on my skin, which did not disappear until a month later!

Of course, I was compensated later. We set up two cute tents on a slope with shrubs bearing delicious blue berries around us. Seen from above, it looked like two red flowers blooming in the green leaves. This is the first time that I had slept in a tent. That day, I also walked bare-foot all day for the first time because my shoes were worn out. The lichen on the ground was almost 20 cm thick, like a luxurious carpet. It was very comfortable to walk on it!

I enjoy my major because it always reminds me that there are many different ways to live in this world.

MicroEdu: What a romantic traveler! What kind of lifestyle do you appreciate most and would like to pursue?

Chen Yang: My ideal career would be a photographer for National Geographic, with the chance to explore the mysteries of the world. One word for my attitude towards lifestyle: Change! I would die if I have to live in a "stagnant pond."

MicroEdu: Nearly all of your classmates were recommended for direct admission into the graduate program at Beijing University. What made you decide to study abroad instead of following the trend? Did you just want a change?

Chen Yang: Although Beijing University was called the "Harvard of China" by Clinton, this is apparently an exaggeration. According to my 5-year experience there, the courses they offered were not satisfactory.

First, I never felt like a student of science in Beijing University. My department used to be the department of geography, and we had to inherit this heritage: geography courses take a lion's share of our curriculum. To be frank, I actually like geography, but geography doesn't have a very close relationship with Environmental Science. Even if they taught some courses in the Environmental Science area, they seemed more like "popular" Science. It reminded me of a flying squirrel, being capable of five skills - but an expert in none. After 4 years of study at this department, I am still not familiar with environmental monitoring or water processing. By contrast, the faculties of the environmental science programs at many overseas universities usually come from very diverse departments, and are experts in their own fields.

Secondly, as I have stated, my curiosity to see more of this world couldn't be satisfied by staying at Beijing. I stayed there long enough. I often wondered what the other side of the world looks like.

Thirdly, from a personal angle, if I get an offer from the United States, it will lift a heavy burden off my family. Plus, many students in Beijing University choose to go abroad, and that further spurs my desire to go.

MicroEdu: I know you applied to 20 schools, with several sub-majors within the E. Science major. How did you manage to handle all of them? Do you think your background and interest match well with all of those programs?

Chen Yang: The reason I applied to so many schools might be because of my ineffective application strategy.

My scores on the GRE and TOEFL are quite common, as well as my undergraduate GPA. I heard there were some students with very good test scores and GPAs that only got admitted to ordinary schools. I thought I was inferior to them and didn't expect to get into a top school. I thought the best thing to do at that time was to apply to as many schools as possible. However, this strategy proved to be foolish. I broadened my scope. My major is E.S., but I applied E. Engineering - I couldn't even meet the course criteria they required!

MicroEdu: At that time, you had no idea about a suitable application strategy?

Chen Yang: No. And Environmental Science is such a broad field that I needed a definite direction. This put me into dilemma: if I aimed too specific, then professors of other disciplines

might not accept me. But if I was shooting too broadly, then my PS would be very superficial and ambiguous. Unfortunately I chose the latter. Some professors recommend emphasizing your major interest: e.g. a UIUC professor declined my taoci by saying that our interests didn't match at all. Actually, I thought they are quite close.

MicroEdu: What are your research interests?

Chen Yang: As my advisor is an ecologist, my research was mainly on ecology, not Environmental Chemistry. However, I applied to many Environmental Chemistry programs. This also proved to be a waste.

Actually, I think 6 schools, at most, fit my interest. This includes nice schools like Yale, Columbia and so forth. The competition is fierce and ecology faculty is prone to accepting biology majors. So I submitted a number of applications, but only received one offer, from Ohio State University.

This offer came quite by chance. I just browsed the brochure of OSU and found quite a few professors whose field fit my interest. I wrote an email to him and attached my CV, because his name is listed first in the brochure! Surprisingly, he promptly replied with a 1000-word email, accepting me on the spot!

Sometimes when I look back, I think, "What if I had not written that e-mail to him?" But I also hate myself for not writing more. I usually just would write just one e-mail to one professor of a specific school and wait patiently for his reply. Few answered promptly. When I got a refusal, I would get discouraged to write more e-mails to other professors at this school.

MicroEdu: Have you described your interesting travel experiences in your essay?

Chen Yang: I just mentioned a little in my PS for geography, in the beginning. No doubt the essay should be eye-catching, but to be interesting it needn't be the whole story: research fields, experience, and abilities are more important in my opinion.

MicroEdu: Now looking back, how do you evaluate your application as a whole?

Chen Yang: I would say it was a great failure, though not a complete one. My lessons were: don't blindly broaden the application range, choose those programs that fit your interest and background best, and contact the professors as much as possible - it is they who can decide whether to take you or not. The rest is just luck!

Statement of Intent

I should hate to be confined within four walls all day. Luckily my motherland China possesses a bonanza of exotic sites, which instantly cure this illness bordering on claustrophobia. I have marveled at the magnitude of the Inner Mongolia plateau, admired the sunrise on the top of Mt Emei, was entranced by the marvelous Guilin scenery; and traveled alone along the Yangtze River. So it comes as no surprise that I would get hooked on geography and study in the department of Urban and Environmental Sciences, formerly the department of geography, where I found my Mecca and began to build my sailing ship to explore this arena full of amazement and curiosity.

It is impossible to navigate without an adequate supply. Thanks to Peking University's rich resources, I have laid a broad and solid base in natural and social sciences, especially in mathematics, biology, chemistry, and computer. For example, when I took Environmental Biology I read intensively four references: Genetics and Biology: Life and Environment, Genetics, Vertebrate zoology and Invertebrate zoology. Wide scope is one of the sources of my confidence. I also have advanced research skills, which enable me to handle water issues at various levels. I can utilize spectrophotometry, chromatography and pology to analyze the water pollutants. Meanwhile I can monitor a large lake with the aid of GIS and RS.

Then I tentatively began my virgin voyage. Since I took part in The Water Usage of China international program in 1998, I have been involved in a number of national and international projects. I was the only undergraduate in the research group of Endangered Waterbirds Conservation and Their Habitat Management in Liaohe Delta Wetland. This year I worked as Research Assistant with Professor Jingyun Fang, a famous environmentalist in China. The research subjects in which I participated include bioremediation of wetlands, monitoring of the eutrophication of East Lake, and biodiversity along altitudinal gradients. Currently I am working in an international project - Changes in Habitats and Population Dynamics for Wetland Birds in Dongting Lake. Besides rich hands-on experience, the broad range of the topics and the variety of jobs I have taken provided me with ample opportunities to have insight into many aspects of geography, especially with environmental foci. Not long ago I independently proposed a project: The Economic Loss of the Destruction to Beijing's Historic Buildings Caused by Air Pollution, and it has won the sponsership from our university.

To a navigator, a big problem is to find his destination on the broad sea. Fortunately through these projects I have found mine among the numerous areas of geography - to be a specialist in biogeography. As we ascended Mt Changbai to survey the biodiversity there, the vegetation changed gradually from temperate forest to coniferous forest to the tundra at 2691 m above sea level. We seemed to have made a journey from temperate zone to the Arctic! Further analysis revealed that there coexist both Arctic components and tropical components. How have they migrated into the same place?

The most common answer is the invasion and retreat of the prehistorical glaciers. But when did they happen? Which one came earlier? How could the tropical component stand the cold when the

glacier invaded or vice versa? Another riddle is that Betula ermanii jumps from 2000m to 1500m on Mt Changbai, showing different ecotypes. Such questions regarding "Where and Why" drive me to find the answers with an ecological and evolutionary approach. What's more, study of the distribution of biological material over the earth's surface and the influencing factors logically provides a starting point for our understanding of the role of man in relation to the ecological context.

Yet, on the way to my destination await many obstacles. For example, to get a clue out of tons of seemingly unrelated geographic data is as difficult as to look for a needle in a haystack. During the program of Liaohe Delta, I was initially at a loss, but this awkwardness soon changed into excitement after my advisor showed me the compass of GIS. With its aid, we successfully predicted three possible scenarios of the Delta in 20 years. GIS relates the location with its attributes and thus can provide many potential usages, such as a self-driving car, environmental monitoring etc. To me it is very crucial because biogeography usually has to be dealt with on a large scale. I am more than sure that with the compass of GIS, I would attain my goal as a successful biogeographer regardless of the thick fog.

But where should I go? Pennsylvania State University, with its No. 1 rank in geography, free atmosphere, and distinguished scholars, is unsurprisingly, my first choice. I am also very happy to see that Pennsylvania State University offers both depth and flexibility to its graduate students.
Thus I can design programs tailored to my interest. With the rich resources of Pennsylvania State University, and my devotion, formal background and perseverance, I am confident that I will reach my shore of success in the foreseeable future.

Chapter 5 Pearl, University of Rochester

Pearl's Profile

Name	Pearl
Gender	Female
Undergraduate	BS, Biological Science, Shandong University, 2001
Scores	GRE V730, Q800, A790; TOEFL 637; GPA 3.7
Publications	NO

Universities Applied	**Major**	**Degree**	**Result**
Baylor College of Medicine	Biomedical Sciences	Ph.D.	
Brandies University	Biomedical Sciences	Ph.D.	
Cornell University	Biomedical Sciences	Ph.D.	
Health Science Center at Houston	Biomedical Sciences	Ph.D.	
Syracuse University	Biomedical Sciences	Ph.D.	Fellowship
University of California, Berkeley	Biomedical Sciences	Ph.D.	
University of California, Los Angles	Biomedical Sciences	Ph.D.	
University of Maryland	Biomedical Sciences	Ph.D.	RA
University of Pennsylvania	Biomedical Sciences	Ph.D.	
University of Rochester	**Biomedical Sciences**	**Ph.D.**	**Fellowship**
University of Texas	Biomedical Sciences	Ph.D.	

Interview with Pearl

MicroEdu: Hi, Pearl! Congratulations on your success! About a year ago, you participated in the MicroEdu Essay Editing Service and had your essay commented on by two MicroEdu Team Members in America. How did you first know about this program?

Pearl: A friend of mine recommended MicroEdu to me last summer. Then I found out this marvelous program. Not long ago, I browsed through my original version of PS and MicroEdu's comments again. It brought me back to the painful December, (smile)

You know, when I first started writing my PS, my goal was to make a "unique" one. I still think it is important to keep your PS distinguished from others. But unfortunately, I didn't know how to create one gracefully. So, after receiving MicroEdu's comments, I was dismayed. The "perfect" words I chose were deleted ruthlessly, the things I was proud of were said to be "irrelevant". MicroEdu Team said my personal statement sounded romantic rather than professional, no obvious logic link. You know what that meant to a science student? To me, it's equals to saying that you're not a qualified science major.

MicroEdu: Can you describe that painful December a bit more?

Pearl: I spent about two months working on my PS. I remembered during that period I would wake up with the question haunting me: how to write my PS. EVERY morning in two months! It made me sick. I wrote a total of four versions. The one I sent to MicroEdu for the first time is the second one. The first version was killed by my friend.

MicroEdu: Did you ever lose heart in the two months?

Pearl: Never. Though I had to admit that my first PS might be poorly written, I had confidence in myself as a qualified science student. I believed I could write something more academic and more professional.

MicroEdu's comments enlightened me. I remembered that they told me that "Information" and "Logic" were the two most important factors of a PS. So I tried to focus more on my research experience, academic view for Academic Research, etc. After all, professors will be more interested in my scientific knowledge. Also, my English was not that good as to "move" the professors so I'd better present facts.

I read some sample essays written by other people. But I don't think they're very helpful. I think the most useful way is to THINK. Surely this is not my genius idea (smile). After I sent out my final version, Jinbo wrote back in his email, "This is more like an academic essay and more professional."

MicroEdu: What will be your research interest at Rochester? When and how did you start to

plan on studying aboard?

Pearl: Still doing something related to basic bioresearch: Molecular Medicine, to explore the molecular mechanism of disease.

I decided to study aboard after the completion of my second year in college. The reason is simple. I'm a bio major. To study abroad is the best route. Since I'm planning to go to the US sooner or later, why waste my years here in China getting an MS? You know, we're all applying for a Ph.D. in the US. If you get an MS here, you still have to spend another 5-7 years in the US for a Ph.D., just as the undergrads would have to do.

MicroEdu: You have very impressive GPA, GRE and TOEFL scores. You should be confident about the application before applying, right?

Pearl: Well, to tell you the truth, I think I can get admission from a US school if everything goes smoothly, but I know, it will not be a top school.

I have some weak points. First of all, I don't have much research experience. Secondly, I'm only an undergraduate from a not so famous school. Finally, the research field I'm interested in barely has anything to do with my educational background. You know, the poor facilities here made it impossible to carry out that kind of research in China. Only labs in Chinese Academy of Science can do it.

MicroEdu: Did you do anything to strengthen your research background?

Pearl: Uh, I found a lab job. I just wanted to show that I have "potential." You know, as an undergraduate, I have no publications and it was impossible to publish one in half a year. So, what I did was to work in the best lab I could find in my school, and tried to learn experiment skills as much as I could.

MicroEdu: How many schools interviewed you? Could you talk a little about the interview experience with UCLA?

Pearl: I had three interviews altogether: Two phone interviews including one from Rochester and a face-to-face one with UCLA.

I think the reason why I failed with UCLA is that I was not confident enough. I lacked confidence because I was worried that I might not be qualified. Before the interview, I studied the research fields of its faculties of UCLA. I did like it. But, I have to admit that I was not very familiar with that field. And I think I made a big mistake by admitting that the reason I chose UCLA was that it was a combined program so that I wouldn't need to take pains to decide which road to take at that moment.
There were two ladies. One asked some general ones and the other paid much attention to details, such as the methods I used in my experiment. I did badly on some specific questions in my major.

I was asked whether I'd used a certain method, I simply said "no," though I knew it was a common one practiced in that research field.

MicroEdu: Did you think over what you could have done so that you may have had a better result?

Pearl: I think had I explained a bit more, at least I wouldn't feel so regretful now. I guess the reason was I didn't have much confidence in myself. I said to myself: if it fails, it should be that way; if it succeeds, that is simply because I'm lucky. I still feel a bit of pity that I won't enjoy California sunshine, (smile)

MicroEdu: What about those two telephone interviews? One is from Rochester, right?

Pearl: Yeah, the last one in April. I am grateful to the professor who interviewed me. He emailed me a day before the interview, saying, "Please be relaxed. I'll help you to make this interview a successful and enjoyable experience." You know, I was greatly encouraged! It surely was. I could feel from their voices that they were kind and friendly. In fact, I felt the same way in the other 2 interviews. When it was time for me to ask questions, I asked the Professor if it was cold in winter there, and the Professor said:" Oh no, you could learn skiing here! I love skiing. It is great."

MicroEdu: How did you prepare for those interviews?

Pearl: The most common questions one encounters in the interview are: Tell us something about your research experience; maybe details are required, it depends. Why do you choose our school? Our department? Any questions about us? In fact, those are almost all we'll get in an interview. So, get the best answer one can think of. I get the information mainly from the school brochures. But that's not enough for a successful interview. Then, I'll search every corner of the homepage of that Department for more details.

MicroEdu: Is it because of your personal interests or because the field is promising that you choose biomedical science, or both?

Pearl: As to choosing a major, it is because of my personal interests, and, I can say that it is promising. But I grew interested in this major only after I'd already been a Bio major. Just like marriage first, then fall in love. (smile)

MicroEdu: Will you divorce or you will make biomedical studies a lifelong commitment?

Pearl: Nope, at least now I'm enjoying this company, (smile)

MicroEdu: Is it true that students of biology have better chances of financial aid?

Pearl: Maybe. I think at least it is not hard for us, but surely not as easy as Physics or Chemistry. It is often true that we get more money than guys in other departments.

MicroEdu: Any suggestions you will give to the applicants of similar major?

Pearl: First, think if you really want to pursue a bio career. It usually takes 5 to 7 years to get a Ph.D. degree, so think before you act. Second, do try to get rich research experience. It is the crucial point. Third, do not spend too much time on GRE and TOEFL. Pay more attention to your GPA and research instead.

MicroEdu: Any additional points you wish to make?

Pearl: Yes, acknowledgement! I just want to take this chance to thank you, thank MicroEdu, thank friends I made here at MicroEdu, especially Bo Wu, a University of Pennsylvania bio student, who gave me many good suggestions and encouragement during the application process.
I think I've learned that people really need encouragement to live on, at least for me...

MicroEdu: Thank you, Pearl! I wish you a beautiful and shinning life as your name! Best wishes for your future endeavor!

Statement of Purpose

What is life? How genes and proteins function and regulate in an organism? What are the underlying workings of cells? It was these initial curiosities that led me to be a Biochemistry & Molecular Biology major. After 4 years of exploration in this magnetic biological world, I am convinced that I have made the right choice: I am more than eager to step into the coming, post-genomic" era to decode life in three dimensions at the atomic and molecular level.

Besides a GPA of 4.0, averaging 93 points out of 100 in major courses, I am a 5-time winner of No. 1 position for the past six semesters. In my Junior year, I was selected by Professor Xia to work in the Genetic & Cell Engineering Laboratory, a national key lab, as a Research Assistant along with her graduate students for M.S. and Ph.D.

In her lab, I was assigned to work on the identification of intergeneric somatic hybrids between wheat and related grasses at different levels, such as DNA, chromosome and protein. I mastered several biochemical and molecular biology techniques: DNA isolation and purification from plant and E.coli, protein separation and purification, southern blot and chromatography. To inspect transgenic outcome and expression of target gene, I used methods including RAPD and esterase and peroxidase isozyme analysis. Currently I am working on the analysis of wheat seed storage proteins. By using SDS-PAGE (polyacrylamide gel electrophoresis) and PCR amplification with specially designed primers, we hope to find a few molecular markers that can be applied routinely to the selection of better quality lines in breeding populations. In 1996, it was in this lab where the world's first instance of distant hybridization between wheat (T. Aestivum) and A.elongatum was reported. I am very excited and proud knowing that part of my work will contribute to the final result of the whole project.

With the recent remarkable advances in life sciences, I am deeply moved and inspired by the promise of the ultimate goal expected by the scientific community to describe the collective properties of whole organisms in a precise and quantitative way: structural & functional Genomics and Proteomics. I come to realize that gaining the DNA sequence heralds the end of the beginning. The next step in this biological revolution is "functional genomics", not simply the assignation of function to the identified genes but the organization and control of genetic pathways that come together to make up the physiology of an organism. I wonder how cells function in health and disease, the relationship between structure and function of macromolecular, gene regulation, enzyme mechanisms and regulation, and signal transduction. I equally find a keen interest in rational drug design and development because of great potentials it could offer to save lives and improve human health and well being. I feel that what I have learned is far from sufficient to tackle these problems, thus I have decided to continue my education by pursuing a doctoral degree. I believe that as a quick learner, with a solid academic background and zest for lab work, I will get a deeper understanding of the molecular organization and operation of cells, tissues and whole organisms through my graduate studies.

When I am applying for graduate school, I try to organize my thoughts into three major

considerations: the school, the program and the people. In my opinion, all three stand out as being particularly distinguished at ABC University, a collegial, collaborative research environment having a strong faculty and interdisciplinary program. I have no doubt that doing my graduate work here in the DEF Program is the best thing I could do at this stage of my life.

After completing my graduate study, I would like to pursue postdoctoral research followed by careers in academia. I expect that research-intensive Ph.D. training here will help me be well prepared for careers in biomedical research, biotechnological and pharmaceutical industries.

Two Formulas for Application Success

A question first: Why do you suppose that the school should admit you? Is it because you are a top student ever since elementary school, or because you've received many prizes in college, or because you have extremely high GRE and TOEFL scores?
Is your logic in application similar to this: I'm a well-qualified applicant so that you must accept me? If this is the case, I'm sorry, that's totally wrong. You're actually doing a blind date.

Formula 1: I am good >> so you should take me in

I learned this lesson from the failure in getting into my dream school. I was a strong candidate and was lucky enough to have an interview with a highly competitive school. When asked why I chose it, I made a big mistake that I didn't realize at the time: I admitted that I hadn't decided my research field yet, so I chose their combined program because I didn't have to choose a specific department at that time. The director responded immediately that they surely hoped that students would have a decision soon, and the aim of the combined program was to provide more flexibility. Several days later, I was turned down. "We strive to find the best possible fit between the interests of each applicant and the expertise of our faculty," the refusal letter said. That's the point. Like Lock and Key. Rather than exaggerating that the key is a perfect one, made of gold or being long-lasting, it is more efficient to say that the key is the right one for the lock. It can open it with ease. So, in my opinion, we should change our application strategy into this: I believe I'm the right person you're looking for and here is some of the evidence.

Formula 2: I am the right one for you >> here is the evidence

As a non-medical student, I was admitted by a Medical Center, which has a nationally renowned hospital. The director of that program was surprised when she learned that I was currently doing some research on plants but not on animals for my undergraduate thesis. "So, what do you like to do, plants or mammalian? Or both?" She joked. Though my research background seemed a little irrelevant, they still gave me the offer. As they said, they believe I have the "potential". Here is the evidence to show my potential: I knew what their faculties were doing; I had my own view on their research even though I didn't have any hands-on experience in those areas; I was interested in their program and I believed I would be a great student in their department...So, in short, my passion for and knowledge about their program plus my good academic record won them over.

See the difference? Don't waste time persuading every lock how perfect a key you are, try to find the lock of a suitable type, then it would be an easy job to unlock it.

Chapter 6 Charles, University of California, San Diego

Charles's Profile

Name	Charles
Gender	Male
Undergraduate	BS, Electrical Engineering, Shanghai Jiao Tong University, 2001
Scores	GRE: V780; Q800, A800, TOEFL:650; TWE: 5.0; GPA 3.6
Publications	NO

Universities Applied	Major	Degree	Result
Cornell University	Electrical Engineering	Ph.D.	
Duke University	Electrical Engineering	Ph.D.	
Drexel University	Electrical Engineering	Ph.D.	
Pennsylvania State University	Electrical Engineering	Ph.D.	
Princeton University	Electrical Engineering	Ph.D.	Admission
Rice University	Electrical Engineering	Ph.D.	
University of California, San Diego	**Electrical Engineering**	**Ph.D.**	**Fellowship**
University of Colorado, Boulder	Electrical Engineering	Ph.D.	Admission
University of Florida	Electrical Engineering	Ph.D.	
University of Maryland, College Park	Electrical Engineering	Ph.D.	Fellowship+RA
University of Michigan, Ann Arbor	Electrical Engineering	Ph.D.	
University of Wisconsin, Madison	Electrical Engineering	Ph.D.	Admission
University of Toronto	Electrical Engineering	Ph.D.	RA
Virginia Technology Institute	Electrical Engineering	Ph.D.	Admission
SUNY, Stone Brook	Electrical Engineering	Ph.D.	
University of Texas, Austin	Electrical Engineering	Ph.D.	RA
Washington University, St. Louis	Electrical Engineering	Ph.D.	
Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute	Electrical Engineering	Ph.D.	Fellowship

Interview with Charles

MicroEdu: Congratulations, Charles! You were granted a handful of admissions and offers, which put you into a difficult final decision, right? Can you tell us where these offers are from?

Charles: Department of ECE, University of California at San Diego, University of Maryland at College Park, and Department of Decision Science and Engineering Systems at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute.

MicroEdu: And finally you choose University of California at San Diego, why?

Charles: As for UMCP, the advisor's specialty is computer engineering, to be more specific, embedded systems. But my desired specialty is signal processing. I've done my undergraduate thesis in this field, signal processing.

UCSD offers me a fellowship and I can choose my specialty freely. Indeed, they assigned an advisor whose research interests match well with me.

MicroEdu: What are the major differences between programs at Department of EE and those at Decision Science and Engineering Systems?

Charles: Simply put, decision science uses applied mathematics, signal processing, control theory and many other techniques in EE and CS to solve decision problems in finance, business, social studies etc. It's called "Soft Science."

MicroEdu: Does this mean that applicants of Decision Science come from a wider background than those from EE and CS? They can be students of mathematics and some other disciplines?

Charles: Yeah, you're definitely right

MicroEdu: Why does decision science attract you?

Charles: The broad application of this study! I'm especially interested in its application in finance. I've forever dreamed of using finance engineering in stock and derivative trading and analysis.

But I finally give it up, because I don't know its job prospect in the US. It's just a dream. I don't know much about finance and I don't have a clear picture of the prospect after I graduate from RPI. On the other hand, EE in UCSD is not bad. Furthermore, since finance engineering uses a lot of signal processing and other EE and CS techniques, I think learning EE should be helpful towards my dream. I'll get an MS in EE and then decide whether to transfer or not.

MicroEdu: Since you mentioned job prospect, what's the prospect for EE graduates?

Charles: Most of them can find a job in an American company with a high salary. They will have a bright future according to what I have learned from the web. You know, Qualcomm is in San Diego, if only I could get admitted.

MicroEdu: You seem to know so well about your field and the field that you are interested in like Decision Science. How did you get that kind of knowledge? Is it important to know that kind of knowledge?

Charles: I gained such knowledge mostly from the web. I scrutinized the website of DSES@RPI and visited lots of related websites, for example, similar programs in other universities. In application, I browsed a huge amount of professors' research interests, which widened my scope and improved my knowledge to a great extent. Furthermore, I like to visit bookstores, browse books, but rarely buy any. Thus I also acquired much knowledge.

MicroEdu: You have been studying in a gifted class, a special class of top students. Tell us how much do you enjoy studying among these top smart young people.

Charles: I really enjoy studying in such a top class. There are many from whom I can learn a lot. In fact, one-third of my knowledge gained in college came from teachers, one-third from discussions between my classmates and me, and the rest from self-teaching.

MicroEdu: Since you are a student of a gifted class, people may say," Oh, of course, he has the chance to study abroad." Do you have opinions on that? Do you have suggestions for other applicants?

Charles: I think it is a factor, but not an important one. I think, in an American professor's eye, what you've done in the class is more important than the fact that you're just a member of the class. Of course, as you can see from my materials, I mentioned the gifted class a lot, but my major goal is to emphasize my achievement and excellence in the class. For those who are in common class, I think to emphasize your achievement and excellence in your class and your department will accomplish the same.

MicroEdu: Okay, tell us something about your application, which may be the part that interests our readers most.

Charles: I started to prepare my application from October 2000 after I finished my GRE on September 28, 2000. I began to research on some programs by engineering school ranking and EE ranking. And, I also asked advice from acquaintances. After about three weeks, I had a general idea of each program, the faculty interest and the academic strength. Admittedly, it is somewhat subjective in choosing universities at the same academic level.

Finally, I applied to 29 programs altogether. Among these schools, I paid application fees for 18 programs. Approximately 5 programs from top 10, 6 from 11-25, 13 from 26-50, 4 from 51-75,

and 1 after 75. But this is not exact because of different versions of rankings. Besides, some departments are not EE. Now I do not think I did it wisely. I should not have applied to so many programs. Since I only paid application fees to half of the schools, most schools didn't review my application packages.

MicroEdu: Before applying, how confident were you about your chance of admissions?

Charles: To be frank, my GPA is not very high. Some of my classmates have GPAs higher than mine. My T and G scores are indeed high, but it may not be so desirable for last year. My research experience does not distinguish me much from my classmates. Maybe my application material is done with more care so it appears to be clearer and better-organized than my classmates. But, I was fully confident about my application ungroundedly. (smile)

MicroEdu: You present yourself to the admissions committee with a clear and defined image by your Personal Statement and references letters than scores and figures, right?

Charles: Possibly. At least my essay touched the heart of an advisor from UMCP. He's from China and he told me my PS reminded him of his childhood. I wish I could know the exact answers of the American professors.

MicroEdu: I think we can hardly write something that will make American professors recall their childhood (smile). Can you share with us some unforgettable memory during your application?

Charles: Those were tough days when I had to make a choice between UMCP and RPI, the first two offers before the offer of UCSD came unexpectedly. I had been lingering for almost a month. My family wanted me to choose UMCP and I wanted to go to RPI. My parents, my uncle and aunt... all tried to persuade me with great efforts.

MicroEdu: Many people think EE is extremely competitive and not easy to get offers. You have gone through all the process now. What's your opinion?

Charles: I don't think it's too hard. Many of my classmates got offers too, although not all got a fellowship. I think research experience will greatly add to one's competitiveness.

MicroEdu: What will vou say to fellow applicants of EE programs?

Charles: Visit MicroEdu.com more. Regrettably, I did not know MicroEdu at the time of my application. Later, I read the Real-time Case Study of Application at MicroEdu. They are simply great! Applicants will surely learn a lot from these cases, successful or not. And those comments from the experts like you are insightful.

MicroEdu: Thank you, Charles! And thank you for the compliments on MicroEdu. Wish you a very promising future!

Statement of Purpose

Prologue

As a top student of the Department of Electronic Engineering at the Shanghai Jiao Tong University, one of the most prestigious universities in P.R. China, I am submitting this document in support of my application for acceptance into your graduate program. With four years of strict training and conscientious studies behind me, I am now versed in a broad range of subjects related to this discipline. By applying to the graduate program at your university, I am seeking to acquire cutting-edge expertise and to realize my career goal.

Have Come a Long Way to Where I am Now

Having been brought up in a small town named Zibo in Shandong province, I received a relatively low-standard education in the elementary school and the junior high school. Fortunately, my parents realized that the key for my future was education. In order to render me a better education and accordingly more opportunities, in the last year of my junior high, they made the painful decision of giving up their established careers and moved to Shanghai, the country's economic capital. Motivated by my parents' self-sacrifice, I acquired the kind of determination, drive, and sense of responsibility not usually expected from my generation in China. Although I was a long way behind my new classmates because of the gap of education standards in the two cities, I managed to catch up by studying hard. I still remember vividly that bitter summer. While others were enjoying themselves outside, I stayed in the sweltering room, studying the textbooks that I had never seen before. My hard work was finally paid off. While my classmates were still preparing for the entrance exam for senior high school, I was already admitted to The Special Class for Gifted Youth in a prestigious senior school. The class is well known for its selectivity because there are only four such classes in Shanghai, one of the most populous cities of the world.

Because of its selectivity, the students in my class are extremely competitive. I found that my academic standing was only somewhere in the middle echelon of a band of ingenious students. However, with the progress I had made, I had the confidence that I could distinguish myself in this new environment. In fact, the outcome of my efforts did prove that the determination to excel my classmates was not a breed of vanity. I won the First Prize of Shanghai in the National Physics Contest of High School Students, which is a rare honor even in my class. When I graduated from senior high school in 1994, I got the highest total score of my school in the National University Entrance Examination. The score and the highest prize won me acceptance into The Special Class for Top Students, which is designed for the most excellent students in China, in the Department of Electronic Engineering at Shanghai Jiao Tong Univcrsity, the most demanding department in a most esteemed university in China.

I am recounting this experience of mine only to demonstrate a quality I believe I possess – the ability to excel in the face of challenges. This ability comes from my determination, drive, sense of responsibility, and strong self-confidence. With this ability, I have achieved what most young Shanghailanders have not achieved. If admitted, I believe I can also succeed in a new environment in the USA just as I succeeded in a new environment in Shanghai in the past.

My Academic Record

My undergraduate education so far is characterized by indisputable excellence. I made myself a top student even in THE SPECIAL CLASS FOR TOP STUDENTS. My GPA constantly ranked me among the top 3% of the approximate 300 students in my department. The honors and accolades I won during my undergraduate studies reflected my achievements (Please check "Honors and Scholarships" for details). Recognizing the importance of mathematics, I have audited many courses in the Department of Mathematics by special arrangement for gifted students. I have also participated in research work since my junior year (Please check "Research Experience" for details.). In recognition of my achievements, my department offered to accept me for graduate studies without the normal mandatory examinations, a privilege that is only granted to exceptionally gifted students.

My Interested Fields

Seeking to ride the tide of the times in an era of Information Technology, I chose Electrical Engineering as my major without hesitation. Of the many fields in EE, how to detect and estimate the signals in noises is constantly arousing my curiosity. My interest in Signal Processing, especially in (field name), has been strengthened through years of study and research work in statistical signal processing. I am also interested in (field name). It can be seen from the development and tendency of science that the boundaries between different disciplines are blurring and some theories are having increasingly broad application. Information Theory, Cybernetics, and System Theory are foundations for all kinds of Information Technologies, and they have broad application in many fields other than engineering. The three theories share many common principles and are closely related. After adequate preparation, I will proceed into the challenging fields of combination and application of the three theories in signal processing and other areas.

In my studies, I recognized the importance of mathematics. I need a systematic training in mathematics for more advanced studies. So I want to take a mathematical minor, such as applied mathematics, scientific computation, or statistics, in my graduate study.

Since I was broadly trained in Electrical and Computer Engineering, you may find me qualified or more qualified for advanced studies in areas other than what 1 have mentioned. If that is the case, your suggestions will be greatly appreciated.

Your University Is Ideal

To pursue the graduate study is both intellectually exhilarating and challenging, but to decide which university to attend is one of the biggest decisions in one's life. Keeping these in mind, I consider (University name) as my first choice. I heard of (University name) while I was still a senior school student. Its outstanding libraries, some of the best-equipped laboratories, a distinguished faculty, and a stimulating academic atmosphere have made (university name) a renowned university in the world.

The Department of ECE in (university name) plays a pioneering role in electrical engineering

research. I acquired information about the ECE program of (University name) through various ways and I am happy to find that it has scholars working actively in the areas that concern me. In addition, as the Department of ECE encourages interdisciplinary research, it perfectly suits my background and ideals.

To pursue graduate study abroad, I have given up an opportunity to be admitted to the Ph.D. program in the Department of Electronic Engineering of my Alma Mater, a move that has given rise to some uncertainty for my future. But I have heard that, if a fog prevents the sailor of a small boat from seeing the buoy marking his course, he turns the boat quickly in small circles, knowing that the waves he makes will rock the buoy in his vicinity. The making of these waves may engender some danger, but that is a small risk to take for finding where his course lies. A boat that stays in the harbor never encounters any danger, but it does not get anywhere either.

My Future Plans

Ideally, I would like to be admitted directly into a Ph.D. program in Electrical Engineering with a minor in applied mathematics, scientific computation, or statistics. If this were not possible, I would like to be enrolled in a Master's program that would lead me into Ph.D. studies. I plan to return to China after the completion of my Ph.D. studies to teach or do research work at a prestigious university.

Epilogue

I know meeting the requirements for a graduate, education demands personal sacrifice of time, of unstructured leisure, of immediate rewards. But the achievement is well worth the cost in terms of intellectual satisfaction and gratification. And I believe the advanced courses, balanced program and distinguished faculty of your department will help me reach that achievement. With the conviction that I can sustain myself through the intense graduate study, I have made the decision to apply for Department of ECE at (university name) and request your serious consideration.

Chapter 7 Yuanyuan Ding, Texas A&M University

Yuanyuan Ding's Profile

Name	Ding, Yuanyuan
Gender	Male
Graduate	MS, Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering, BUAA, 2001
Undergraduate	BS, Mechanical Manufacturing Control and Detection, BUAA, 1988
Scores	GRE: V640, Q800, A740; TOEFL: 607; GPA: (G)3.87, (U)3.58
Publications	Yes

Universities Applied	Major	Degree	Result
Cornell University	Air Traffic Management	Ph.D.	RA
Massachusetts Institute of Technology	Air Traffic Management	Ph.D.	Admission
Old Dominion University	Air Traffic Management	Ph.D.	
Princeton University	Air Traffic Management	Ph.D.	Admission
Purdue University	Air Traffic Management	Ph.D.	Fellowship
Texas A&M University	**Air Traffic Management**	**Ph.D.**	**RA**
University of Alabama	Air Traffic Management	Ph.D.	RA
University of Florida	Air Traffic Management	Ph.D.	RA
University of Minnesota	Air Traffic Management	Ph.D.	TA

Interview with Yuanyuan Ding

MicroEdu: Yuanyuan, Congratulations for your big success on application! But I heard that your visa application was not very smooth. What went wrong?

Yuanyuan: I met the Pakistani female officer during my first interview. Later she told me the reason she declined me is "your financial aid is too much and your English is too good, so I do not think you'll come back. If I were you, I'd stay in USA." It is ridiculous, isn't it? Admittedly, I was a little overly confident because of my good oral English. I did not spend much time on preparing for the interview.

For the second appointment, I tried my best and finally got it. The whole month from my visa denial to the second interview was difficult. However, it let me know one thing; that is, if we do not get what we want, it is only because we have not done our best.

MicroEdu: What are some of the preparations you did during the month?

Yuanyuan: I thought over any possible questions a VO might ask, what will VO think about my answers, and which details will VO further inquire of me. I need to detect whether there will be traps. If yes, I should avoid them.

MicroEdu: But you still spoke eloquent English and you still had a big sum of financial aid, right (smile)?

Yuanyuan: Yes. But this time I met another VO. He did not seem to care about such questions although I had prepared well in case he would ask the same ones.

If I were asked about financial aids, I would say, "the financial aid is offered based on my excellent academic background. And it is used to support my study in USA not to make me rich. What's more, in fact, that's not a big number to make me a millionaire."

As for my oral English, I would say it could be to my advantage only when I came back to my homeland. If I stayed in the US with all native speakers around, it was nothing.

MicroEdu: You were studying engineering in BUAA. Why do you change your specialty into management?

Yuanyuan: I studied mechanical-electronic engineering in BUAA. But air traffic management is about using advanced technologies to control air traffic and finally to make the flights more efficient and punctual. That's not a change of specialty.

MicroEdu: Thank you for correcting me. So what will be your research interest at TAMU?

Ylianyuan: The same, air traffic management. TAMU's program in this field ranks in the top 5. The university is near NASA, which is located in Houston.

Let me talk a little about air traffic management. On the ground we need traffic policemen to control the traffic in the air. We know that in a traffic jam, police will solve the problem quickly. For the traffic in the air, we need advanced technologies in communication when sudden problems develop. For example, if a flight will be delayed because of bad weather in Beijing and the flight is going to Shanghai, what can we do to make the smallest loss? We should first use an advanced communication device to inform the airport in Shanghai about the delay. Then we could use the runway, which is originally set for the delayed flight. I mean Shanghai could use the runway for other flights. It will enhance the usability of runways. This is only a small aspect. In a word, Air Traffic Management is to use all the air resources, such as flight routes, and airports more efficiently.

MicroEdu: Why do you want to study Air Traffic Management in the US? How far does China lag behind in this field?

Ylianyuan: There aren't any universities in China offering Ph.D. programs in Air Traffic Management. Let me give you an example. China now doesn't have such kind of advanced communication technologies used in Air Traffic Management. I mean when a flight delays, it just delays. The runway will always be available until the delayed flight lands.

MicroEdu: What will you do after graduation?

Ylianyuan: It depends on the opportunities. If I could find a good job in the US, and I do not mean earning a high salary, I'd like to do something I'm interested in and could expect to get a senior position. Otherwise I'll come back to China to set up my own business.

MicroEdu: What kind of business that will be?

Ylianyuan: I want to set up a technology consultant company on air traffic management. It will be a technical partner of China Air Traffic Management Bureau and China's Airline Company. I did my Master's degree project in both the Bureau and the Company. I know they need advanced technologies and they want to buy some devices. But they do not know which are the most suitable.

MicroEdu: You actually failed in vour last year's application. What improvement have you made this time?

Ylianyuan: I think as time goes by, our Chinese students' application materials will become stronger and stronger. We all seem to have excellent academic backgrounds, excellent R&D experience, even though I know not all of them are true. As more and more applicants refine their application strategies, we need to be dynamic.

I mean, when no one else writes a good PS and you do, then you are the best. But when all have a good PS as you have, you are ordinary. To get the financial aids and exceed other applicants, we need to personalize our application materials.

MicroEdu: How did you do that?

Yuanyuan: First, I wrote an R&D Vitae and included the project abstracts that I thought professors might be interested in. Then I translated some of my thesis into English and sent them to the professors via email. It worked well.

I also paid much attention to the detail of my application material. I think when the contents of all the application material is excellent, I should improve the package of the content. Package can always change the fate of the commodities. What I mean is to write a clear cover letter, to arrange all the application material in a clear listing format, to make the application envelope more attractive, etc. These are the experiences that only worked last year. Maybe this year, every applicant will follow and you have to think independently on how you can exceed others.

MicroEdu: How many schools did you apply altogether?

Yuanyuan: I applied to ten universities and seven offered me financial aids including Cornell and Purdue. But the specialties did not fit me well, so I did not choose them. As for my major, I think MIT is the best.

MicroEdu: How did you stand out among all the other applicants? The scores of your GRE and TOEFL are average among Chinese applicants.

Yuanyuan: I think the first is my R&D Vitae. I wrote down every project I have worked on; what I have learned, problems I found, and what I want to study further. I think that's what a professor wants to know. Then it was my carefully designed application package. I arranged my application material into a file: each piece of paper in one plastic pocket. I think that will give a deep impression on them.

MicroEdu: What will you say to all the other fellow applicants?

Yuanyuan: The lesson I learned is if you do not get something you want, do not claim that life is unfair or that God has prejudice. It is simply you who have not done your best.

MicroEdu: Very encouraging, Yuanyuan! Thank you! Wish you best in your future endeavor.

Personal Statement

Having studied at China's best university in aeronautics and astronautics, Beijing University of Aeronautics and Astronautics, for nearly seven years, I have a definite goal to become a successful researcher and engineer in the aerospace industry. I have a strong desire to pursue advanced study in your program that matches my research interests. I also have an excellent academic record and research experience.

Wide Range of Research Experience and Great Adaptation Ability

My research experience began with a project named "Four-Seat Multipurpose Light Aircraft Design and Research". Through participation in this project, I gained a profound understanding of the general design process from conceptual design, selection of general parameters, testing in the wind tunnel to analysis of controllability and stability, and computation loads structure design and optimization. I found nothing more exciting than to see the aircraft model designed by me flying freely in the sky, and I found myself deeply absorbed in the design-related field.

The close co-operation between my department and several large corporations allowed me to participate in a variety of beneficial internship programs. The most challenging work was the practice of Using CAD/CAM in the Production of the Detail of the Boeing Airplane in Shenyang Aircraft Manufacturing Company, one of China's most advanced airplane manufacturers. My work included using CATIA workstation, imported from the Boeing Company, to help design and manufacture the Boeing 737-700's 48th section. This work experience not only provided me with the opportunity to apply what I had learned in my course "Mechanical Design" and "Mechanical Drawing" into practice, but also sharpened my insight into the whole procedure of aircraft design and manufacturing technology. It specifically gave me the chance to become acquainted with the structure of both domestic and overseas passenger aircraft, such as Boeing series and Yun-7, which was China's primary passenger aircraft during the 70's and 80's.

With an intense desire to improve my research ability in a new academic research environment, I chose to do my undergraduate diploma project at Wuhan University of Hydraulic and Electric Engineering. My work focused on the project "Analysis of Main-Spindle Ball Bearing for High-speed Aero Engine" which studied the performance of main-spindle ball bearing involved in dynamics, fatigue life and design criterion in full depth. Thanks to the guidance of my director, Professor Guo, an expert in design and control, I accomplished my work and wrote a high quality thesis in advance. I spent my remaining time engaged in another project "The Application of Finite Element Analysis System in Mechanics" applied to analyze the mechanics of welding component. This experience was very important because it gave me both the chance to adapt to a new environment and the self-confidence to undergo hardships in accomplishing difficult work. Shortly after my graduate study began, mx' successful and fruitful graduate research experience started with "Research of MD 90-30 Empennage Assembling Plan". It investigated the special structure that appears during the assembling process in the form of combining straight bulkhead and inclined bulkheads and the assembling coordinated relationship among empennage and other assemblies. When this project ended in September 1999, my tutor was selected as an exchange

scholar to Tsinghua University and he introduced me to a research group in the Department of Electronic Engineering. That was really a great challenge since i had to learn and understand the professional knowledge in an all-new research area. it took me two months to get familiar with the whole program structure of Aviation Management Information Systems, which is the core project of the research group and software developed to control air-traffic easily and accurately.
Then I was put in charge of the programming task in one of the three primary modules. When this project came to an end, I received compliments from my advisor and clients using this software. I was then chosen to take part in another project: Automatic Dependence Surveillance (ADS) System Based on VHF Data Link. The system is employed to realize aircraft automatic dependence surveillance based on the ADS system, which is composed of multi-network using different protocols. Now this project is well under way and expected to be finished in February 2001.

Overwhelmingly Strong Desire for Advanced Study

During my internship in Shenyang Aircraft Manufacturing Company, I found out that the development of the aerospace industry in China has been lagging behind that of many developed countries in many aspects, such as part process technique and aircraft design. I must accept the fact that almost all the passenger aircraft used now in China arc imported from Boeing and Airbus. Also, China cannot design and manufacture complicated aircraft independently without importing equipment and software. I consider it my responsibility to contribute to the effort of developing China's aerospace industry. To achieve this, I need better training than what I have already received to date. The advanced aerospace industry and high-level educational institution in the United States will expose me to new perspectives and help me to be successful in reaching this goal.

Prospects at University of Florida

By carefully reading the overall introduction of your program from the Internet, 1 found that my research interests, Structural Design & Optimization and Flight Science are similar to the interests of some professors in your department. Many courses in your program such as "Structural Optimization" and "Modern Techniques of Structural Dynamics" fascinate me very much. And nothing has proved more challenging and intriguing to me than in-depth research in the Dynamics and Control Research Group and Structural & Multidisciplinary Optimization Research Group since their interest in areas of research match mine well. With my solid base in R&D experience and advanced training in your program, I think I will be able to take great strides toward fulfilling my professional objective.

Chapter 8 Meryl, Tufts University

Meryl's Profile

Name	Meryl
Gender	Female
Undergraduate	BA, Economics, Shanghai University of Finance and Economics, 1996
Scores	GRE: 1900; TOEFL: 630; GPA 84/100
Publications	NO

Universities Applied	**Major**	**Degree**	**Result**
Brandies University	International Economics and Finance	MA	Partial Aid
Bentley College	Computer Science	MS	Admission
Carnegie Mellon University	Mathematical Finance	MS	
Pace University	Business Economics	MA	Admission
Southern Illinois University	Economics and Finance	MA	Partial Aid
Tufts University	**Economics**	**MA**	**Partial Aid**
Yale University	International Relations	MA	

Interview with Meryl

MicroEdu: Meryl, you majored in economics in college and you have a very impressive working experience. Why didn't you apply for an MBA?

Meryl: At the beginning of my application, I was so ambitious that I intended to target both MBA programs and research programs. I had even gotten the reference letters prepared for MBA programs. However, as I was going through the process, it became clearer that what I wanted was a totally different life from the one I had then. I couldn't have gone on with my essays if I had lied on what I liked to do. If I had worked on an MBA, I would probably get nothing.

MicroEdu: Then why an MS program, not a PhD program, and why did you apply to different majors?

Meryl: It's not realistic for me, a person in the midst of her professional career, to compete with those fresh graduates on scores, faculty recommendations and commitment to academic work. I would rather take a transition to the Master level of study to adjust myself to the expected status. Therefore, when I decided on which schools to apply to, I purposely selected the schools that emphasized Master's programs. Either pursuing a Ph.D. or resuming my professional life can be more promising after I have earned a Master's degree. I like my area and would not switch to others.

MicroEdu: Your GRE score is only 1900. This is incredibly low in the eyes of most Chinese applicants. Of course, we at MicroEdu have always emphasized that scores are not so important. You have proven our theory, as now you are in Tufts University, one of the very best private universities in America. Thank you! Nevertheless, were you confident with such a score when applying?

Meryl: Why not? My college transcripts look good and I did quite well in the courses of mathematics and economics, which are more important than GRE scores. All my other credentials demonstrated my competence in academic research and ability of independent thinking. What I did for my score -was to give a reasonable explanation in the essay.

MicroEdu: Why didn't you study abroad right after graduation?

Meryl: My area in college was finance, the core of business activity. My thinking was very simple, I must gain the first-hand experience in the real world before I can say something meaningful and insightful about it. Now I have a rather clear picture of it after having worked in business for years, and will go for more advanced academic training.

MicroEdu: It must have been difficult for you to prepare for the application? What part was the most difficult in your application?

Meryl: Writing essays. As MicroEdu tells us. Think, think, and think again! Admittedly, thinking was the hardest part of my essay writing. You need to retrospect your past and foresee your future, besides concentrating on current tasks. Because I took it very seriously, I revised each of them dozens of times and asked several people to proofread it. I even browsed such magazines as Economists, Business Week, etc. for word usage.

MicroEdu: Which schools did you apply to, and why?

Meryl: Yale University for the International Relations program. Tufts University for Economics, Brandeis University for International Economics and Finance, Pace University for Business Economics, Bentley College for Computer Science, Carnegie Mellon university for Mathematical Finance, Boston University for Economics, and Southern Illinois University for Economics and finance.

For my application, I set a very high standard. I included Yale in my target schools, not aiming to get its offer but to push myself to do the best that I was able. Southern Illinois University is supposed to be my last choice, in case, I couldn't get any other offers. I still can get in as I was advised by an insider at Southern Illinois University. Tufts and Brandeis were my favorites. They are great private schools and don't have many Chinese students, less than 100 each. The rest of the schools don't appear as important as the above two, but they do have their unique aspects. The campus of Pace University is located on Wall Street. Boston University recruits hundreds of Chinese students. And CMU's program focuses on computer science. They are truly excellent in that field.

MicroEdu: Between your two favorite schools. Tufts and Brandeis, why did you choose Tufts?

Meryl: I was very lucky that both of my favorite schools offered me a partial scholarship. Between them, I finally chose Tufts simply because I can finish the study in one year, a very short break of my professional life. Of course, its location, excellent teaching and emphasis on the Master's program attracted me greatly.

MicroEdu: Tell us a little bit about your past working experience and your plan after graduation?

Meryl: During the past four years, I was engaged in areas of accounting, corporate finance, and economic analysis. Besides the professional expertise, I have been training myself to be a strategic thinker and proactive doer. All these contribute to my good results of school application. In today's increasingly volatile and highly integrated world, the future steps I can see become much more limited, after graduation I hope to get some practice in the States for my study, joining an economic research institute like Blumburg, is my first step. Financial companies are also my favorites. With specialized knowledge and enriched skills, I would gain more confidence to compete with those MBAs.

MicroEdu: Thank you very much!

Personal Statement

As a strategy analyst at the largest real estate company in Southeast Asia, I am a member of the "think tank" for the company's business strategy in the Chinese market and focus on corporate planning and investment analysis. However, when I worked on assignments such as analyzing China's macroeconomic situation and projecting RMB interest rates, I felt confined by my insufficient knowledge in economic theories and meager research methodologies. I am also concerned about how China can pull itself out of the difficulties of exacerbating unemployment, rising deflation and futile state-owned enterprise reengineering while confronting increasingly harsh global competition. All these ignite my desire to refine my expertise in economics through graduate study. In recognition of the excellent teaching and intensive curriculum provided by your department, I believe that it is a perfect place for me to pursue an M.A. degree in Economics.

With the idea of becoming a future leader in China's economic development, I started my expedition in this field with my undergraduate years in Shanghai University of Finance and Economics. Through my major in Finance, I acquired a good master), of rationales in economics and finance, which was evidenced by my GPA of 84/100 and the highest rank in core courses, i.e., political economics, western economics, public finance, and graduate thesis. Meanwhile, I was well exposed to mathematics courses such as statistics, linear algebra and calculus. By taking International Business as my minor, I commanded basic knowledge in this area and improved my communication skills in English. More importantly, this program presented me to the fundamental role of business within a socioeconomic body, especially China's transforming from planned economy to market economy. My belief has been constantly reinforced by my observations obtained from my internship, extracurricular activities and professional life.

After an attempt in a startup firm, I made my first step in the real business world by joining TNT Logistics China, a Europe-based company. Starting as an accountant and then a financial analyst, I always kept my mind open to gain a deep understanding of business, which became a firm foundation for my future endeavor in the economic arena. In the process of running a full set of accounts, I learned how to make an insightful and objective interpretation of financial statements.
In many projects such as consulting for P&G, working on cost saving and budgeting, I examined a variety of behaviors of firms and consumers in responding to each other and their external environment. Hence, I gained a profound comprehension about microeconomics.

In order to develop my abilities in economic analysis, a),ear ago, I joined my current employer, the China Holdings of a Singapore-based company, as an Assistant Manager of the Corporate Finance Department and concentrated on project financing. In this position, I had extensive practice in judging macroeconomic situations consisting of fluctuation of the interest rate, adjustment in fiscal policy and changes in international capital market, etc., and to make financial decisions accordingly. The various projects I worked on included refinancing USD loans with RMI3 loans for cost cutting, procuring dual currency loans and deducting paid-in foreign capital, etc. In addition, the research papers provided by our partners such as Citibank and CS First Boston kept me informed of the development of global and the Chinese economy. Later, I transferred to

my present department to assist in corporate decision making. I am now working on macroeconomic indicator analysis, research paper reference, panel consultation and report writing. With original data, I have established a socioeconomic indicator database that facilitates our corporate planning work. This demanding job not only enhances my analytical competence but also rewards me with hands-on experience in academic research. In the project of forecasting a 5-year demand for residential properties in this metropolitan, I drew on many research materials for assumptions on macro economy and applied statistic modules for the calculations. In this case, I also found many hidden issues for me to explore: mainly defects in the government's industry policymaking and macro economy control. Admittedly, this job has made me virtually recognize the importance of economic development strategies for a country.

While being excited by what I am doing, I realized that my current knowledge is insufficient to let me tackle the hard problems in China's economic reform and fulfill my ideal. Fortunately, I found your unique program designed for prepared students. Its core courses can build for me a solid foundation of empirical theories in economics. With applied macroeconomics forecasting, topics in money and finance as my elective courses, I will be able to explore the fields I am interested in. The location of your university will provide me extraordinary opportunities to take advantage of the rich intellectual resources in many other top institutions. In addition, since I am already in the middle of my career, the one-year duration is one of my major considerations in program search. On the other hand, as China's accession to WTO is approaching, the country's first priority is to reform and open its economy. Therefore, numerous committed scholars and professionals are needed to define and create the future course of China's economic development. I strongly feel obligated to be a member of them. For all the above reasons, it is the right time for me to resume my academic study in your school.

After study and practice in the US, I will return to Shanghai to dedicate myself to economic policy making. Modernizing the financial market according to international standards has become the imminent task for China. I believe that after receiving rigorous training in your program, I will be well equipped to assist in opening and reforming China's financial market and promoting its international economic cooperation. I may work in the public sector or be engaged in economic research. In a word, I wish to probe the unknown realm of China's economic development towards globalization.

In light of my solid academic background, relevant experience and strong aspiration for a career in economic affairs, I hereby, in full conviction of my decision, submit my application you're your consideration. While being aware that my GRE score is not among the best, I hope you can understand my lack of time in preparing for the tests during our company's annual planning session, the most critical period of our department. With great passion and confidence, I look forward to hearing your positive reply.

Chapter 9 Chenguang Li, Ohio State University

Li Chenguang's Profile

Name	Li, Chenguang
Gender	Male
Undergraduate	BS, Department of Engineering Physics, Tshinghua University, 2001
Scores	GRE: V680, Q800, A800; TOEFL: 650; TWE: 4.5; GPA: 87.2/100

Universities Applied	**Major**	**Degree**	**Result**
Georgia Institute of Technology	Nuclear Engineering	Ph.D.	
Massachusetts Institute of Technology	Nuclear Engineering	Ph.D.	
North Carolina University	Nuclear Engineering	Ph.D.	Admission
Ohio State University	**Nuclear Engineering**	**Ph.D.**	**Fellowship**
Oregon State University	Nuclear Engineering	Ph.D.	TA
Pennsylvania State University	Nuclear Engineering	Ph.D.	
Purdue University	Nuclear Engineering	Ph.D.	
Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute	Nuclear Engineering	Ph.D.	
University of California, Berkeley	Nuclear Engineering	Ph.D.	
University of Florida	Nuclear Engineering	Ph.D.	Admission
University of Illinois, Urbana Champion	Nuclear Engineering	Ph.D.	RA
University of Maryland	Nuclear Engineering	Ph.D.	
University of Michigan	Nuclear Engineering	Ph.D.	Admission
University of Tennessee	Nuclear Engineering	Ph.D.	Admission

Interview with Li Chenguang

MicroEdu: When talking about Nuclear Engineering, nuclear reactor and accelerator are the first few words that come into my mind. But the application of this new energy can be very broad, right? What will be your research interest at Ohio State University?

Chenguang: My research will be mainly concentrating on nuclear radiation and it's application in medicine. Radiation can be used to detect the inside image of objects, the faraway cosmic stars, and the inside of the human body. It can also be used to cure diseases such as cancer. The instrument such as CT, gamma knife is an example of its application. As my undergraduate major is Engineering Physics, which is about the application of radiation, it is close to the graduate study.

The future development of its application in medicine falls into two main directions: one is detection - to get more and more accurate images with higher and higher speed and reliability; the second is treatment, using radiation to kill the diseased part of the body, with less and less damage to the rest of the body.

MicroEdu: When did you set your heart on the application of radiation?

Chenguang: I was enrolled in the Department of Engineering Physics by chance. Later, mainly in my junior and senior years, I became more and more familiar with this major and learned its direction of development by taking classes and doing experiments. It was natural that I decided to do further work on it. It was a gradual process.

MicroEdu: Can you discuss briefly the Nuclear Engineering department at Ohio State University? Does any research project at this department attract you in particular? Also, do you have a general idea of the Nuclear Engineering programs provided by American universities?

Chenguang: The Nuclear Engineering program at Ohio State University ranks 14 in the US. Like other Nuclear Engineering programs in the US, it contains several research fields, reactor, accelerator, and radiation detection, etc. It is middle-sized, and each year it admits some Chinese students.

Their nuclear medicine program is good and suits my interest. One of my senior alumni told me that in the field of radiation detection and nuclear medicine, OSU ranks about 7 or 8 in the US. The Nuclear Engineering programs provided by American Universities are among the best in the world in the field of radiation detection and nuclear medicine. MIT and the University of Michigan are the top 2 schools; other schools such as Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, North Caroline State University, Pennsylvania State University, Georgia Institute of Technology and Ohio State University are also very good. Some schools are closely related to the important national laboratories such as Oak Ridge and Los Alamos.

MicroEdu: You really know a lot about the programs that you want to apply to. You are also a very competitive applicant. Are you satisfied with the application result? If not, what explanations will you provide? Given a second chance, what will you do to improve your chances?

Chenguang: I think I am competitive in both my academic record and English ability. But compared with some graduate students, I am relatively weak in research experience. So, this was my disadvantage. In order to improve my research ability and strengthen my research background, I joined the SRT program. Student Research Training. It is a program designed for the undergraduates of Tsinghua. Unluckily, it happened to be at the time when I was taking English tests and applying to graduate schools, so I did not spend a lot of time on it.

Frankly, I am not very satisfied with the application result. My ideal school is University of Michigan. I heard that this year they only gave 2-4 offers to China and all of them are graduates. In the last few years, most of the Tsinghua students who were enrolled in the Nuclear Engineering department at Michigan transferred to some other hot majors like EE. So it becomes more difficult.

If there had been a second chance, I would have done several things. First, conduct more careful research on the programs of the university and judge whether it is suitable for me. Second, take the exam of TSE. This exam has become more important in recent years. Third, to learn more about the major.

MicroEdu: Can you share with us the interview story from MIT? Any tips on interviews you can give to future applicants?

Chengiiang: I was notified that 5 days later I would receive an in person interview by MIT. To me, the interview went well, but in the end, MIT did not accept one student from our department. That's a bit strange. In 1999, MIT accepted 10 Nuclear Engineering students from China, and most of them were from Tsinghua.

Upon receiving the notification, I started to prepare for possible questions they would ask, such as my understanding of the major, why I want to go to the university, etc.

Their questions are mainly designed to test my oral English and my academic proficiency. Besides some general questions, such as education background, family condition, hobbies, and courses taken, they also asked me some questions on my major, such as the equipment used and the work I had done in my undergraduate years. One question on which I did not do well was regarding the type of radiation detectors and their principles. I wish I had prepared more regarding my major and learned more about their program and the professors beforehand.
I would suggest to those who will take interviews: be more familiar with the general knowledge in your major, read more about the introduction of the program of the school. Speak slowly and clearly, and be confident.

MicroEdu: Compared with those widely provided programs like EE and CS, much fewer Nuclear Engineering programs are available for applicants. So how did you select those programs?

Chenguang: Since there are fewer, the selection becomes easier. First, I think the rank in my major field and in Engineering is an important fact. Second, I will choose those good programs that match my research interest.

MicroEdu: Have you ever thought of transferring later? What will you do after graduation?

Chenguang: I think I will concentrate on one research field for at least 2-3 years, and the possibility that I will transfer is small. Even if I would transfer, I would transfer to a program, which closely relates to the work that I have done, such as biomedical engineering. All this would depend on a possible opportunity.

MicroEdu: Did you write to any professors who share the same research interests as you do? What is your opinion on contacting professors?

Chenguang: I have emailed to several, but the result was disappointing. Although I received polite encouragement from some of them, I did not get any offer from these professors. My opinion is not to contact professors only to say that you are interested in their program. You should have better preparation and understanding of their articles, research fields, etc. Otherwise the professor won't have much interest in you.

MicroEdu: Looking li.ick at the whole application process, is there anything that is still fresh in your memory

Chenguang: I think the most impressive event was the interview of MIT. It was the only interview I had in my application process, and with the top 1 school. I prepared a lot but not enough, and I have a little bit of regret. The first offer I received from UIUC is also unforgettable.

MicroEdu: Please give some suggestions to the applicants of nuclear engineering.

Chenguang: First, get as much information as you can, from the program of the university, to the inclination of the university to accept international and B.S or M.S students. The more information you have, the better chance you will receive an offer. Secondly, write a persuasive and attractive PS. It is important. Thirdly, select the school carefully and skillfully. You can apply to the majors close to your own background. As to the Nuclear Engineering student, you can also apply to physics and biomedical Engineering, or even EE. Finally, try to send your application as early as you can.

MicroEdu: Thank you, Chenguang! I wish you a great future!

Statement of Purpose

I am determined to become a top engineer and researcher in radiology, advancing the development and application of this important technology.

This is an era when information technologies, such as electronics and computer science, are mushrooming throughout the world. But how about radiological science? Is it a diminishing subject without a future? Of course not! It is a research area that has a unique and indispensable position in many fields such as industry and medical science. In my point of view, radiological science can be classified as a branch of information technology. Why? Combined with computer science and electronics, radiology provides us with information that was originally thought to be invisible such as the interior structure of metal, the image of the inside of the human body and even the existence of a celestial body far away from us. With the capacity of acquiring many kinds of important information, radiology is undoubtedly a promising research field.

My initial interest in radiological science was sparked by a visit to the laboratory of the Large Container Inspection System (LCIS) when I was a freshman of Tsinghua University. LCIS, specially designed for Customs, was one of the key national projects taken charge by the Department of Engineering Physics. As a fruit of radiological science, it can present the image of the interior of a large container without even opening it. The seemingly magical power was really attractive to me, a young man with a keen curiosity and the ambition to fulfill accomplishments in engineering and applied technology.

In the spring of 1999, I entered the (name) Laboratory and began to assist the professor in research. The assistant's job offered me a great opportunity to work with and learn from the professors and graduates in the lab, who had not only taught me a lot of knowledge in radiology, but also impressed me with their enthusiasm and devotion to this field. To be competent in the job, often went to the library to read books and science journals on radiology, such as the Nuclear Instruments and Methods and IEEE Nuclear Science & Medical Imaging. This reading, though a little bit difficult, brought to me valuable information of the state-of-the-art technology. With my broadening mind and growing interest, I am determined to become a top engineer and researcher in radiology, advancing the development and application of this important technology.

While reading the journals, I discovered that the US is the best place to pursue my further study and research because of its favorable atmosphere of research in radiology. And the University of (name), one leader in nuclear engineering, has the graduate program that I most want to be associated with.

From web sites and publications introducing the (university name), I learned that you are conducting a wide range of research in radiology, much of which I am interested in, such as radiation instrument design and radiation imaging. With the world-class faculty, advanced facility, nurturing and challenging environment, your graduate school is the best place where I can extend myself with the most advanced technologies.

I know that the admission to your school is very competitive and challenging. But I am confident that I am qualified and well prepared for it. The undergraduate study in Tsinghua has built for me a solid academic foundation in mathematics and physics as well as in my major. Intelligent and diligent, I received outstanding records in the courses I've taken and my overall GPA is in the top 5% of our department, for which I have been granted scholarships for 4 consecutive years.

My research ability is also outstanding. In my college years, I took advantage of every opportunity to enhance my research ability and enrich my research experience in my major. I carefully and creatively planned and conducted the experiments in all the lab courses, such as Lab of Physics and Lab of Modern Physics. In the course of Modern Physical Electronics, I, with one of my classmates, designed an experiment to test the transmission feature of electrical cable used in the oil well nuclear logging system, and proposed some advice to make improvements. I also took part in the SRT (student research training) program, doing lab work on the application of virtual instrument in radiation detection and nuclear instrumentation. In the lab, I am appreciated by my advisor, Professor (name) for I am not only able to conduct research independently, but also understand how to cooperate with others.

As a college student, I am well developed in many aspects. As the monitor of the class, I showed responsibility and leadership in my work. For my excellence in English ability (please refer to the Resume), I was selected as the editor of the University English TV Station and the broadcaster of the University English Radio Station. I love sports and take part in many fields of it: I am the captain of the basketball team of the class, the fourth place winner in the University Badminton Tournament and a good I-go player. In the annual Comprehensive Quality Assessment taken by the university to scale the students' all around ability, I am always the top student of my class.

I can not forget the days when I was in primary school, short and weak, always failing in the sports matches. With my enthusiasm in sports and the determination to become strong, I started to exercise. Each time when I was exhausted from running, out of breath and my legs aching, it was my perseverance that had kept me on the track. With my efforts paying off, my conviction became firmer: determination and perseverance is crucial in people's success.

With my perseverance and strong interest, as well as the academic background and the research ability, I am confident that I am a suitable candidate for your graduate program. My intended field of study is radiation measurement and imaging, medical physics and other related areas in radiology science. If I could be admitted and financially aided, I would like to pursue my PhD degree there. And after that, I will come back to China, to enter industry or research institutes to promote the research and application of radiological science.

Chapter 10 Lee, A top Technology Institute

Lee's Profile

Name	Lee
Gender	Male
Graduate	MS, EE (Microwave and Radio Engineering)
Undergraduate	BE, EE (Electronics and Mechanics)
Scores	GRE: V630, Q780, A760, TOEFL: 610; TWE: 4.0; GPA: 88/100

Interview with Lee

MicroEdu: You are going to study your favorite wireless communication in a top ranked engineering school. Congratulations! I understand when you applied to the EE programs, you were in a rather difficult situation, which was related to many aspects of your personal and student life. Would you mind sharing it with us?

Lee: Thank you and I'd love to share with MicroEdu Members my experience from both campus and work.

While I was at school, I worried about some so-so scores, some courses I didn't want to take, and my major that might not bring me a brilliant future. So I even had some unhappy experience with some teachers. But a bigger problem existed in my character; I was very reserved and didn't like to speak with strangers. I seldom went to the schools weekend dance parties. Now I don't know why I had so many things to worry about back then. I should have lived a much happier and more promising campus life. If I had, I think I could have been much more successful.

My first big change came from my work. It was my first time leaving my parents and becoming independent in a completely new environment. I was surprised to find that I had a potential far beyond the past definition from others and myself. I could easily handle relationships with others. I was good at team working. I had that ability to do a good job in a new environment quickly. And I had an instinct to distinguish myself before strangers.

It is also during this period that I begin to learn about wireless telecommunication. I found I loved it. There are some reasons for my love and devotion to this field. Once I failed in getting a girl whom I really loved. I was very sad, but whenever I went to work and study this new technology, I felt very happy. Later, I often stayed up until 2 o'clock in the morning to study this technology all by myself. I was so excited about this promising field that I rarely felt tired as I had previously. Thus, I was determined that my career should be in wireless telecom. I wish to meet other excellent guys in this field. I am truly happy and confident every day in this field.

MicroEdu: When did you start thinking about studying this field in the US and why?

Lee: Like many newcomers on the road of studying abroad, I also became frustrated with my situation. I could be in a better environment and have a better chance to develop my ability. To make a change in life, I decided to go abroad to study. But the GRE was so tough that I nearly gave it up. The feeling of giving up was really very bad. I could hardly bear it. I could be a loser, but I can never be a quitter. So I stuck to my dream. But I have to admit that my confidence was low sometimes.

MicroEdu: Any other changes later? How did you become the confident and eloquent man as now?

Lee: Believe it or not, I gained my confidence by chatting online. Of course, MicroEdu Chatroom is the only place I go. Talking in English brings me a lot of happiness. When I talk to people from other places around the globe, I become open-minded. Making new friends was such a pleasant experience! Once I thought finding a girlfriend was tough for me. Now I think it is easy: I am a good man, I am sure many beauties will rush for me one day. All such thoughts make me more confident and more optimistic. I find people like a man of confidence, with an easy-going attitude.

MicroEdu: **You mean chatting in MicroEdu actually changed your values and behavior?**

Lee: Yes, I fully understand that in today's world, a successful person should be confident and open-mined who has the ability to handle many kinds of people in any situation. I have learned to accept others and think from the viewpoints of others. I have gained a deeper insight in understanding others and myself. I also learned to bear the results. More importantly, I learned to solve problems.

If we run into any troubles, the smartest way is to solve them! This also works for the application. For example, a professor needs a person with experience. However, it is quite possible we do not have any actual experience in the projects he/she works on. So, think about it. You may possibly have experience in some related field and you can transfer your experience and give your own understanding to form a new experience. I am sure a good professor needs a person who has potential and has passion in fighting against any difficulties ahead. He needs a person who does not stick to a score but studies and thinks in a smart way, a person who is productive and creative.

MicroEdu: So you are thinking from a professor's prospective! I remember that earlier you said you enjoyed chatting in English a lot. How come?

Lee: Indeed, sometimes I prefer chatting in English more than in Chinese. Chatting in English forces me to think and write in English as much as possible. Then I started to post messages at **MicroEdu** Forum, which requires not only thinking, but also organizing my thoughts. Such experiences truly helps in improving my communication skill in English.

MicroEdu: Do you think communication skills are important in an application? Can you

give us an example?

Lee: Sure, very useful! Let me tell you. I passed the deadline when I applied to this school, which finally granted me an offer. Then I wrote an article in my application to explain why I was delayed (smile). One professor reviewed my application and recommended my future advisor to lead it. Later the professor asked me questions. You see, communication or a writing skill is very important! If possible, try to impress others in a reasonable and logical way.

MicroEdu: The wireless subfield is one of the most competitive. With not a very strong background, you went ahead to apply for it. Why did you have so much confidence?

Lee: I was not overly confident that I could win. I even lost my hope at the beginning of April this year. However, I know at this time of my life, a man should have his lifetime career; my career is this promising field, wireless. Even if I fail, I will try to pursue a Ph.D. degree in China.

This way of thinking causes me not to treat the application as only a chance of simply going abroad. If I cannot go abroad, I will study for another year and try a Ph.D. in China. I won't envy others who study abroad at a young age or in good schools. I will be happy if I can work in this field. This expectation is not far-reaching: I have the potential and I have worked in this field for a long time.

MicroEdu: By then you were quite clear about the field you will be passionately engaging in rather than merely to experience studying in a different country.

Lee: Yes, this is very important. Many people failed in their application because, I think, some of them do not think about themselves. Our old saying is "Know yourself and your peers, you will win any time." Some people think going abroad will make them richer and happier. I see the success in my application as a way to speed up my work in my beloved major.

MicroEdu: How did you research schools when you started to apply? Is researching schools worthwhile?

Lee: I spent about one month in studying online the programs offered by almost all top 120 EE schools. If a school's program is well in line with mine, I will try to find out information about the professors, the projects, etc. I really tried to find out their cooperation with industries and other fields. I am sure studying and researching in this environment will bring me many opportunities.

Researching schools is also rewarding. Doing so, you can pick up the schools to which you will apply and minimize your waste on application fees. I have a clear mind of what I like to study in the US, so I do not want to change my interest or transfer later in the US, even though this is one of the most competitive graduate programs.

MicroEdu: Lee, you received an offer rather late. Before that, you had decided to look for a job, right?

Lee: Yes. I tried to find a job in this field. Then, before I even got a job, in mid-April, I got an email from a professor who wished to contact me. I knew it was an opportunity. Later, he asked me some questions. They were about his current projects. He asked me how I could work for him, what was my plan. I sent him my answers.

The professor had 2 projects in hand. One is about wireless receivers; another is about wireless high-speed access network. I consulted with other experts on these questions. However, seldom do people have such practical experience. I read a lot of articles online and then I had a general idea about what to do and how. I sent him my personal understanding. He was satisfied with my answer and soon gave me the offer.

MicroEdu: Can you make a summary of your application? What is your winning strategy?

Lee: My winning strategy? Let me list them:

First, I think I made a correct evaluation of myself and what I really want. Second, since I know who I am and what I want, I know which kind of schools and programs fit me well. The third is my perseverance: I stick to my goal until I am sure it is impossible for me to reach. The fourth, maybe the most important to me, is to try to grasp any opportunity available to me.

To illustrate the fourth one, let me tell one of my stories. An American professor asked me about a project that has not been commercially undertaken in China. I did not have actual experience in this project. What should I do? I asked some experts of mobile telecom. They could not give me any advice because even they did not have experience in it. I did not want to give up since I had not tried my best. I thought I would try to solve this problem by myself. Based on my experience on other related projects, I read a lot of information. Then I gradually understood what I should say to him. As to some questions, I frankly told him, I did not have much experience. However, I still gave him my own understanding and reasoning. I am sure he was still impressed by my courage to face a problem I have never encountered before. As I told you, this ability is even much more important than your current knowledge and skills.

MicroEdu: What suggestions will you give to future EE applicants?

Lee: EE is indeed very competitive. Please try to apply to enough schools to make sure some of them may give you an offer. The most important thing is to find out the most suitable program that is well in line with your academic and working experience.

MicroEdu: Thank you, Lee, for sharing us your efforts which leads to your success! I wish to hear more on your thinking, researching and thus future achievements!

Personal Statement

In the memories of my childhood, I always followed a web: the electrical power web.

My parents, electrical engineers in a power construction company, repeatedly moved from place to place. As they moved, they connected more and more wires, which stretched all over the country...and across my childhood imagination as well. So it was like coming home when I started my college education at the department of Electrical Engineering in (name) Industrial Institute. I had tremendous passion for figuring out the "web" - on paper and in my mind.

My college experience was very fulfilling. I strove to make the most of my educational development, constructing creative problem solving techniques in addition to absorbing knowledge. For example, using a new way of constructing a symmetry spherical function f(x, y, z) by putting three similar plane function g(x, y), g(y, z) and g(z, x), I once solved a very difficult spherical integral problem which no one else in the class could solve. Extending the content of superposition theorem, I developed my thinking of treating a short circuit as two superposed reversed voltage sources with equal amplitude and an open circuit as two superposed reversed current sources with equal amplitude. Then, by superimposing the same black box linear circuits with different sources, I used my own "theorem" to give a very simple solution to the problem. I even amazed the teacher.

In 1995, I entered the graduate program at University of (name) of China, the largest and the most comprehensive electronic and information technical university in China. Our laboratory of 3-millimeter wave technology is the best among Chinese universities. My research was part of the 3-millimeter wave radar telecommunication system. My focus was on millimeter waver power combination (a technology of increasing the transmitting power of the radar) upon the suggestion by Professor Tang, the first researcher to develop 3-millimeter wave resonant oscillator in China.
With limited knowledge in this area, I started my exploration with the several 3-millimeter wave oscillators developed by our Lab. How about trying to connect different oscillators directly and making full use of common wave-guide, especially many wave-guide H-T junctions in our laboratory? I referred to various articles concerned with power combinations, including those in IEEE-MTT. No one had ever used that structure! I had a unique idea! When I presented my idea to Professor Tang, he said that was indeed what he wanted.

There were three major steps in my research. The first, the most important part, is the theoretical analysis of the structure. Then came the calculation.

I needed to program a very large matrix, with each element a matrix as well. I had to be very careful to have a clear program chart in mind, and then carefully work on programming and debugging little by little. The last step was the experiment. Professor Tang taught me how to handle the different kinds of testing equipment. After many days and sleepless nights, so man), calculations, and so much programming and experimenting, I handed in the thesis on time. In retrospect, my workload was always heavy, but it was undoubtedly worth the time and effort.

After graduation, with a solid background in microwave and wireless technology, I joined (name) Group, one of the top five telecommunications R&D industries in China today. I was among the first eight employees of the two month old Division of Mobile Communications. I was also selected to attend the BSS engineer training offered by Motorola, an experience I will never forget. I was amazed to know that there were so many complicated technologies in mobile communications, such as Frequency Hopping, Burst Interleaving, Channel Encoding/Decoding, and the ability to transmit different messages different interfaces. Later, I was singled out to write a book for our new employees to introduce this fascinating technology. Displaying what I thought to be extraordinary passion and diligence, I finished the book myself in two weeks. The book was highly recommended by my managers and colleagues, who held that my explanation of the GSM system was even easier to understand than Motorola's training.

As a hardware engineer, I participated in the GSM engineering project. I even climbed up the antenna tower to install antennas. As a software engineer, I joined the project of developing CDMA module based on the SS7 system of JPM-I commercial mobile exchange system. With message configuration table and data description/control tools, I developed my own version of software to handle signaling messages flow through A and MAP interfaces. This work gave mc a deep understanding of the different interfaces and massages between different layers of OSI models in a mobile system. It also greatly improved my computer skills and strengthened my spirit of cooperation.

Later, I took part in other mobile communication system projects, such as BTS power supply and mobile antenna, and other SDH and LAN/WAN projects. All of them gave me a chance to gain a comprehensive and thorough understanding of the whole communication system.

With years of academic and working experience in the field of wireless communications, I understand my passion for this promising technology. I love this fascinating field. I believe I am a creative and quick learner in this technology. I am good at mathematics, circuits, programs, and applications. My next goal is to pursue my Ph.D. degree in my favorite area, wireless communications. From the electromagnetic transmission in physical laver to a calling establishment flow-chart in application layer, I feel I have prepared well enough, and have a broad enough knowledge of wireless communications to realize my goal.

I choose (university name) because the graduate programs and research projects offered by many academic units, including the Center for Wireless Telecommunications (one of the best wireless research centers in the States), are very in line with my interests. I am very interested in your current projects, such as the Wireless World Wide Web. This technology is still a future research area for many Chinese industries. I believe my study and research in (university name) would enable me to better serve our Chinese future mobile technology. I wish to be admitted to pursue my study and research as part of your excellent program. I believe I can be one of the best-qualified students in your program.

When I was a little boy, I always dreamed of building the same webs as my parents. But while

they built a web that enables us to share energy, I wish to build another web -- a wireless web, an invisible web -- that lets all people around the world share information.

This is the future for which I strive: truly wireless communications.

Chapter 11 Coly, A Top University

Coly's Profile

Name	Coly
Gender	Male
Graduate	International Law, Law Department
Undergraduate	Bachelor of Law, Law School 2000
Scores	GRE: V630, Q800, A800; TOEFL: 627; GPA: 3.8
Publications	Yes

Universities Applied	**Major**	**Degree**	**Result**
One Top University	**Public Law**	**Master**	**RA**
SUNY, Albany	Public Law	Ph.D.	Full Aid
Cornell University	MPA	Master	Admission
Franklin Pierce Law Center	LLM	Master	Half Tuition
Michigan Law School	LLM	Master	Waiver
Harvard Law School	LLM	Master	Scholarship
University of Southern California	International Relations	Ph.D.	
Johns Hopkins University	International Relations	Ph.D.	

Interview with Coly

MicroEdu: As a Master's student in law in China, you finally decided to pursue another master's degree in Public Law in the Department of Political Science in an American University. It seems apparent to me that you will continue to study in an American law school, am I right?

Coly: Yes, I plan to apply to some law schools after I get the master's degree in my current university in America.

MicroEdu: When did you grow interest in law studies and decide to make it your career?

Coly: When I was in high school, I had a chance to go to some famous universities and could choose majors freely. I chose one university at my parents' suggestion. At that time, as I liked to study law and also to keep up my English studies, International Law seemed to be a good choice, so I chose it.

MicroEdu: You must have an excellent academic performance. Could you tell us some of your most satisfactory records?

Coly: I should say none of the past is satisfactory. It should be the next one. I am not showing that I am modest, I am telling the truth. Compared to my classmates, I am just an average student. My good friends are so excellent and lucky that I can only envy them.

MicroEdu: When did you start to think about studying in the US? Wha.t is your specialty in graduate school in China? Does this graduate education significantly boost your competitiveness in application?

Coly: About 2 years ago. But, I was too late to think about this so I had to waste one year in the university. I don't think my graduate experience enhanced my chances. You see, I began to send my applications in November. At that time, I only had 2 months of study as a graduate student and most of the time was spent on preparing for the bar exam.

But I must point out that to be a law student, the working experience is more important than academic background. Lots of foreign law school professors came to our university to give us lectures, such as NYU, Boston University, Washington University in St. Louis. They told us that they welcome those applicants who have experience working in law firms or in big companies. They expect the contribution of students in the class, just like MBA requires more than 2 years of working experience.

MicroEdu: What are some of your experiences in law firms? What did you learn from the real practice that you didn't get from textbooks?

Coly: Most of the time it was boring because I was just an intern, and they didn't give me important tasks. I just typed, faxed, and picked up phone for the boss. Sometimes they asked me to write something, such as the chance for foreign investors in China's Internet field or Legislative Law Review. I learned how to write reports in English and how to tackle problems as a lawyer. After those days, I found what I learned in school was so limited that it could hardly solve any real problem. One should keep on learning in the real world.

MicroEdu: How long did you spend on an application? Was it smooth?

Coly: My application story? It is a common one.

After I graduated in June 2000, I found a part time job in a foreign law firm and worked there everyday. At that time, I sent emails to universities and asked for application materials. I also tried to write the application essays.

But I had a dilemma soon after the vacation. The new semester began and I had to go back to school for my graduate study. At the same time, I had to prepare for the National Bar Examination. It was a rather difficult exam, as I had to remember lots of laws and regulations.

The exam was held on October 22 and 23. After I took the exam there was litde time left for me to prepare for the application. I found that I was extremely crazy. I must go to work in the law firm when I had no classes, and I must prepare for the exam, and I must go to another campus of my university, which is a 3-hour bus ride to another city, to teach the undergraduates. Then I came back home to get mails from foreign universities, check emails, write PS and fill out the forms.

After October 23, I had some rest and went out for a two-day excursion. I also had to do my homework and prepare for my own classes. (Graduate students must read lots of books and give their opinions in class.) It took me nearly 2 weeks.

After that, I finally had some time to get my application done. I spent only 5 days to select the universities to which I wanted to apply and fill out the forms and write the PS and all the other things.

MicroEdu: How many schools did you choose? Do you have certain criteria in choosing a school?

Coly: I was born in a poor family. I didn't dare to apply to a lot, which I couldn't really afford. And I could not afford more than $500 USD which is the limit set by the government. So I had to calculate accurately. I applied to some universities that did not require application fees. Only Cornell waived my application fee. All the money came from my own savings. As I could not tell my university to issue the Approval Certificate for me to change for the US Dollar, I begged a company to help me make a certificate.

But what made me sad was that my parents didn't understand what I was doing. They complained

that I used a lot of money and didn't give some to them, and they complained that I was always taking exams!

Sometimes I asked myself, why I was born to a poor family, why I had to work a lot to support my family and myself while I was still a student. But thank God, all this has passed! Finally, I got some offers!

I could not send out my application until early December and the deadline for some universities was December the first! I have no choice but to choose the university, which gave me the most money, though I would prefer to go to Cornell or some law school. But without money, it is only a dream.

MicroEdu: Thank you, Li! It is such a touching story and I believe that some day your parents will understand your choice. Your efforts and money were generously awarded, right? Tell us the result from some other universities that you have applied!

Coly: One fairly well university gave me full aid, and SUNY-Albany, Ph.D. in Public Law, also offered me full financial support, and Cornell University MPA program admitted me without financial aid, though I didn't pay the application fee, nor the official GRE or TOEFL Scores.

I also applied to law schools for LLM degree. Some accepted me, but their aids are not enough. The biggest sum is only $14,000, half the tuition. They are Franklin Pierce Law Center with a tuition waiver and Michigan Law School, which does not require an application fee.

The University of Southern California, Ph.D. in International Relations, denied me because I could not provide the full transcript of my graduate study in time! How could I do it before I took any exams in January? Also Johns Hopkins University dinged me. It was also for a Ph.D. in International Relations. I think it is not wise to apply to international relations without some background.

MicroEdu: Reviewing your application package, do you think you are a balanced applicant with satisfactory credentials on all aspects or are you particularly strong on certain aspect(s)?

Coly: I lack full time working experience that Law schools do not explicitly demand in their requirements.

MicroEdu: The legal profession has been prosperous, if not overly so in the US for a long time. Yet it is only in the past decade that it became increasingly popular in China. Besides system differences, are there any other differences in practice?

Coly: China and the US have different legal systems; one is a Continental Law system, and one is 'an Anglo-Saxon system. In China, you should have good social relations, Guanxi, to win cases. And the Chinese law is always changing. Regulations aren't comparable to each other.

MicroEdu: Can you give some suggestions to applicants for law studies?

Coly: My suggestion to law students is, if you want to apply for LLM, don't go to graduate schools in China, just go to work in a law firm for 2 years or more to get experience and money, and then you can make a successful application. Law schools just want money from LLM degree students.

If you want to apply for JD, ask yourself whether you or your parents have enough money. And you'd better have a high LSAT score. But, if you want to go to the US and you do not have money, you may need to change your major.

MicroEdu: Coly, thank you for talking with us! Your story will encourage other applicants! Wish you best in your future endeavor!

Personal Statement

With China's impending entry into the World Trade Organization (WTO), I would like to undertake graduate studies in your reputable law school in the United States so that I can be better grounded in public law. This, I believe, will significantly boost me to the forefront in a profession that is starved of talents in China.

Devoted and hard working, I am always the envy of my peers. In 1996, I graduated from high school into the one of most prestigious university in China, which is often dubbed one of the China's Ivy League Universities.

Seeking to ride the tide of the times in an era of reforms and opening-up, I chose International Law as my major. In preparing myself for advanced research, I obtained a solid background in both Chinese and International Law system. I have stayed among the top students in my class of sixty undergraduates. My numerous scholarships and honors also attested to my excellence and academic achievements. Every year I won the First Prize Scholarship of the school besides other highly competitive scholarships, which no one of my major has accomplished in the past.

To enhance my understanding of law, I have not only read extensively but also have taken every opportunity to challenge myself. After hard work in legal research, my diligence and patience paid off. Although undergraduates having publications are quite rare, some of my research papers were published in China's key legal journals. And I was invited to address one of my papers in the symposium held by the social development research center of the Chinese Academy of Social Science, which groups together the best and brightest in China's social scientific community.

But the greatest benefit I have achieved in the university is not awards and honors but a much-broadened vision. It becomes apparent to me that I should keep in touch with the real world and that we college students are molders of society's future. Guided by this understanding, I took every chance to go beyond my textbooks and wet my feet in several extracurricular activities. I have been the leader of the Student Union of our university and I particularly enjoyed this position as it made me more determined, organized and enthusiastic. I also worked part-time in a variety of places off-campus to feel the pulse of China's burgeoning market economy. In those jobs, I have earned all the money I needed to pay my tuition fees and maintenance. Balancing my leadership role, part-time job task with my course load was both challenging and rewarding.

My professional strength, however, go way beyond my excellent academic records. Between September 1999 and January 2000, I served the fall semester as a trainee in the district court to get familiar with the litigation procedure. During the internship, I practiced in a lot of trials of economic, commercial, intellectual properties and maritime law cases. At that time, I was very interested in a maritime law case involving $70,000,000 compensation for damages. With the permission of the collegiate bench trying this case, I wrote the trial report independently after the hearing. In the discussion, I did not hesitate to put forth my perspectives on the judgment and I won the unanimous agreement of all the judges in the bench. After that, I obtained many

opportunities to get embedded application of what I have learned. This intern experience greatly enriched my knowledge of the actual circumstances that may rise or lend defense to claims, and such experience will surely prove highly useful in my future study.

The more I experienced, the more I felt that my training in China falls short of what I needed to effectively deal with my international counterparts in the course of my practice. This summer vacation I worked as an intern in the WG law firm whose strong international practice is anchored in the UK. Though the attorneys there had taught me much, I often found it difficult to be sure about the accurate expression of my report in legal English without comprehensive and advanced training. With China's expected entry into WTO, China is in great need of lawyers who excel in Chinese, foreign languages, International Economic Law and English. Therefore I am eager to undertake graduate studies in a qualified American law school.

The tremendous gap between the American laws and the Chinese laws calls for exactly the kind of expertise in public law. To a very large extent, Chinese laws are still few and far between and are no comparison to those of the US, either in sophistication or in numbers. Hence it is vital for China to learn and borrow from advanced legal regimes such as that of the US. To do so, China must have many of her law students trained in your country. Unfortunately, very few students come to the US to study law because most are deterred by the cost and application requirements of the law schools. I would like to receive the scholarship you offer and enroll in your program. I want to make contributions, particularly in relation to the country's International Economic Laws when I graduate and come back to China to be a lawyer or a public policy adviser. I believe the training in the US will help me realize my ambition to help bridge the gap and I will be able to reach my highest potential in legal studies.

For that, I would appreciate if you could consider my application favorably.

Chapter 12 Xiaodong Cai, Johns Hopkins University

Xiaodong Cai's Profile

Name	Cai, Xiaodong
Gender	Male
Graduate	Medical Doctor, Beijing Union Medical School, 2001
Undergraduate	Certificate of Pre-Medical Major, Peking University, 1996
Scores	GRE: V650, Q790, A770; TOEFL: 663; GPA: 88/100
Internship	Medical School, University of California, San Francisco, 2000
Publications	Yes

Universities Applied	**Major**	**Degree**	**Result**
Emory University	Biostatistics	Ph.D.	
Georgia Southern University	Biostatistics	M.Ph.	Admission
Iowa State University	Biostatistics	Ph.D.	
University of California, Los Angeles	Biostatistics	Ph.D.	Waiting
University of Illinois, Chicago	Biostatistics	Ph.D.	Waiting
University of Iowa	Biostatistics	Ph.D.	Admission
University of North Carolina	Biostatistics	Ph.D.	
University Pittsburgh	Biostatistics	Ph.D.	Waiting
University of Rochester	Biostatistics	Ph.D.	
University of Washington	Biostatistics	Ph.D.	
Yale University	Biostatistics	Ph.D.	
Columbia University	Public Health	Ph.D.	Admission
Johns Hopkins University	**Public Health**	**Ph.D.**	**Waiver**
Loma Linda University	Public Health	Ph.D.	Admission
Tulane University	Public Health	Ph.D.	Admission
University of Alabama	Public Health	Ph.D.	Admission
University of Southern California	Public Health	Ph.D.	Admission
University of Minnesota	Health Informatics	M.S.	Admission
University of Utah	Medical Informatics	Ph.D.	
University of California, San Francisco	Medical Informatics	Ph.D.	Waiting
Case Western Reserve	Epidemiology & Biostatistics	Ph.D.	Admission

Interview with Xiaodong Cai

MicroEdu: Welcome, Xiaodong! Congratulations on your splendid achievement! The tuition waiver from the School of Public Health at Johns Hopkins University, the best school of public health in the US followed by that at Harvard University, is rare for international students. Can you tell us what led you to the path you are now embarking on? Were there any specific influence, idea, or people that you met along the way who influenced you greatly?

Xiaodong: Thanks for your congratulations!

Regarding your question, I think it's quite hard to determine if there is such an event or person of influence for my decision to choose my future track. It is somewhat like stone carving, if I may say so. You just chop away what you don't want and gradually comes out a clear image.

I think my case is quite typical and useful for medical students in China. After graduation, we usually have three choices: hospital, pharmaceutical companies, and the United States.

During my five years of medical education, I found I don't like clinical medicine enough to dedicate all my life to it, where memory and experience dominate, and all those grand rounds, history recording and discussions, etc., drove me nuts. But that didn't prevent me from being a good medical student though. Neither do I like pharmaceutical industries. There aren't many challenges for a medical doctor in that area and public relations is not to my advantage. Studying abroad is a good choice, as my English is excellent.

Usually medical students apply for degrees in basic medical sciences as an alternative to clinical medicine. But, that I don't like it either. What I like, as I realized, is something that combines medical sciences, mathematics and computer sciences, i.e., medical informatics and medical statistics.

However, as I gathered information in those fields, I found my knowledge in information sciences and math, although very impressive as a non-math, non-computer major, lower than the required level. At the same time, I discovered that public health, especially the health system, management, and health economics, fell into my interest of study and future career. Hence my application plans.

You can see this trend in my application targets: 5 medical informatics, 10 biostatistics and 7 public health, a total of 22 institutions. Not very different from what I had expected. I was admitted by 5 public health majors, 2 biostatistics majors and 1 medical informatics major. Therefore, my conclusion is that for medical students who don't want to become physicians or surgeons as their career but want to change their objectives, they may try public health, a very interesting and promising area.

MicroEdu: Interesting comparison between stone carving and the decisions you made along

the way! Let me follow your metaphor. Now the sculptor is clear about the sculpture he is carving, is that so? What is your plan after graduation from the school of public health?

Xiaoddong: Thanks for your remarks! I think there are three choices for me after graduation from JHU, all are in the field of public health.

First, stay in the States. Become a faculty member of the public health program in an institution, a consultant in the health care industry, or a WHO or World Bank official or consultant.

Secondly, come back to China. Become a faculty member of the public health program in an institution, an official in the State Ministry of Health, or a professional in the health care industry, a big insurance company, for example.

Thirdly, third world country or region. Become an official of public health in a third country or region other than the US or mainland China, Singapore, HK, etc. but not Africa, please! This alternative exists because my major is international health oriented in developing countries.

What I like is the first choice: good social status and big bucks (Smile).

MicroEdu: I agree that will be a good choice. Officers in WHO, World Bank and UN are highly respected because they work to free man from scourges of war, hunger and disease.

Suppose you are recruited by World Health Organization and appointed as regional officer for Africa. The appointment requires you to work a couple of years or longer in Africa. Will you take the assignment and work with high responsibility and dedication?

Xiaodong: It depends. I need to be physically prepared for such a tough living environment and there should be frequent family reunion for me, perhaps on a yearly basis at least. Otherwise it would be inhumane.

MicroEdu: Hah! A yearly basis is really not that demanding! Let's talk more about your application. What made you most appealing to public health programs since five out of seven admitted you?

Xiaodong: Personal commitment to public health science, a medical background, and good preparation for future study and research. All these should be emphasized in the personal statement.

MicroEdu: Do you mean that to a great extent, it was your personal statement that convinced the admissions committee?

Xiaodong: I think the admission decision is made on a multi-dimensional basis. Personal statement is, of course, one of the critical factors. Mine clearly reflected that I am determined and prepared.

MicroEdu: Did you realize that your knowledge in information science and math, though impressive as a non-CS-non-math student, did not meet requirements for medical informatics and medical statistics before applying? Did you do anything to maximize your admission?

Xiaodong: No. It is hard to say if I did anything to maximize my chance of admission. I just wanted to make my application perfect. I think I did have at least one strong point and, of course, I made it very clear to the admission officers. I went to UCSF as an exchange student for 2 months. However, I can't provide any credentials of my study there, no certificate, no credit hours or a transcript. And I was always asked for credentials from UCSF, which drove me really crazy.

MicroEdu: Does Public Health program require strong research experience?

Xiaodong: Yes. As far as I know, almost every Ph.D. program requires strong research experience, especially in biomedical sciences.

MicroEdu: Does your internship at the Medical School of University of California, San Francisco help shape the sculpture you are carving? I mean, any significance of the internship?

Xiaodong: Yes. I discovered that health care resources are very abundant and the health insurance system is better. That strengthened my intent to better the health care system in China.

MicroEdu: Do you have concern over living expenses?

Xiaodong: Yes, of course I do. But I have been reassured by several professors including my advisor that opportunities will open up when the new semester begins.

MicroEdu: How long will this Ph.D. program last? What drives you to pursue another Doctor's degree in the US at the cost of time, energy and money?

Xiaodong: This program will take three years. I think it is worth investing time, money and energy to switch to the field I am interested in. It is very difficult to do so here in China.

MicroEdu: When did you start to engage in the application? Any lessons you have learned or experience you can share with your fellow applicants?

Xiaodong: Once I determined to apply for medical statistics or medical informatics or public health, I started to search for information online and on paper in June. In July, I completed the first version of my personal statement and revised it several times later.

I strongly recommend early target identification, i.e., identify personal goal of study and career. Then start early on personal statement and ask for comments and revise it carefully.

MicroEdu: Thank you for the interview! I'll expect to see your exceptional sculpture in the coming years!

Personal Statement of Purpose

Life is like a box of chocolates. You never know what taste you will get next. And so was my ambition for the future. From mathematician to engineer, from physicist to physician. But now, after years of thought and exploration, I am determined to devote my whole life to public health. Born into a family of an engineer and an accountant, I was driven by an inborn momentum for math and was No. 1 from primary school to college years, winning dozens of competitions and awards. The case is almost the same in physics. But before long I realized that math and physics were only tools that provided me with a sound platform for thinking and reasoning, which, critical to medical practice, ensured my excellence in the medical college later.

Due to my academic accomplishments and mastery of English language, I was chosen as one of the two exchange students at the Medical School of the University of California at San Francisco, for two months as a clerk in my seventh college year. What impressed me most was the abundance of medical resources and the advanced health care system, which I don't think China can achieve in the next ten years. This sharp contrast caused me to give up my dream of becoming a physician. I realized that I may offer my people more by researching in the public health area. As a developing country, China is in great need of health resources and most importantly, professionals who are able to accurately analyze health problems and efficiently exploit the existing limited resources, i.e., to design systems and implement equitable and cost-effective strategies for delivering health care and health promotion interventions. However, most public health professionals in China come from either successful physicians or surgeons that lack systematic health system management education or researchers that lack rounded clinical training. In my opinion, an integrated, multidisciplinary, and especially a participatory approach must be the framework of those who are committed to the improvement of a given population's health. Therefore I decided to study and work in the field of international health in your renowned department and institute, which is dedicated to extending better health to those less fortunate in the developing countries, providing innovative solutions to the management of health services and resources. To be specific, my research goals are burden disease evaluation, health information systems and health administration statistics.

With this ambition, I chose the following subject as the research project in my final year; disease burden evaluation, a comprehensive approach with family and social orientation. Based on DALY (Disability-Adjusted Life Year), my research emphasized the effect of disease on the family and society and combined the three sets to obtain a comprehensive evaluation of disease burden. Faced with all those scales and questionnaires in my research, I familiarized myself with SPSS, SAS, DisMod and other statistical packages, adding more to my statistical background established by the medical statistics and epidemiology courses in my college. Now I am fully prepared for advanced training in public health, which will make me a multidisciplinary talent that is qualified in both clinical medicine and public health.

I have a dream that one day I will be working as a public health professional in my countD; helping the people be free of diseases, with keen analyses, better strategies and efficient use of the

limited resources, and above all, my heart and soul.

Reference Letter #1

Dear Professor,
I am glad to recommend Mr. Xiaodong Cai, to study International Health in your esteemed department. Being the supervisor of his rotations in the Peking Union Medical College Hospital and the mentor of his research training in molecular biology, I have a very good chance to observe his performance and communicate with him personally for about two years.

As a teacher, I found Mr. Cai a talented student. He was very inquisitive in the class and oftcn brought up stimulating questions that made right feedback to teachers, which kept lectures in an interactive style. Therefore teaching students like him is a great pleasure. It turned out very naturally that he not only excelled in the exams, but always gave perfect case presentations.

As a physician, I see in this young man patience, sympathy and responsibility, which are more important to a doctor than merely high academic scores are. He cared about patients, chatted with them, cheered them up, and relieved their anxiety. He regards them as a group in the society, not only disturbed individuals. He has a broader view towards community and society. During our conversations, he often raised such questions as "Why does this disease happen so often? .... Why are there still so many people unable to pay the medical bills?", "How to wisely allocatc health resources in China?" etc. He never stopped searching for answers to questions like that, with his keen observation, broad reading and meditation.

As a researcher, I regard Mr. Cai as a qualified candidate and assistant for scientific researches. Although he entered my laboratory only 2 months ago, he is already very familiar with the project and facilities. Moreover, he melted into our research group so readily that it seems as if he had been a member of the team for a long time. Energetic, swift and accurate, he is always the best assistant when help is needed. But he is an independent trainee here in the first place. He read reviews and exchanged his opinions on the project with other members and me frequently. These reciprocal communications go far beyond only the research project. He told me that he chose to have this training in molecular biology research because he wanted to get more rounded medical education and become a multidisciplinary scholar. It is public health that is his major area of intended study. I am glad that he made this right decision. I believe the systemic education of public health in your renowned school will surely answer his questions. I hereby present my full recommendation of this prospective young scholar and look forward to working with a well-prepared medical scientist in the future.

Reference Letter #2

Dear Professor,
I take great pleasure in recommending Mr. Xiaodong Cai, one of my favorite students, for acceptance into your distinguished International Health Ph.D. program.

As Dean of the School of Public Health, Peking Union Medical College, I first knew Mr. Cai when I gave the class lectures on epidemiology two years ago. He distinguished himself by asking penetrating questions and leading heated discussions during and after classes. As a result of his dedicated efforts, he compiled an outstanding record in the very challenging final exam.

My in-depth communication with Mr. Cai began six months ago when he volunteered as a part-time participator in my "Burden of Disease Evaluation" research. Well articulated, he expressed his intent to get more training in public health and described to me his goal of becoming a public health scientist. He was readily accepted because of his excellent academic performance and the ardor to help the diseased in a macroscopic approach. He understood quickly when I explained the project and amazed me by asking about several key points like "disability weight" and "Decision Tree". But what surprised me most was his self-study capability. He produced a well-referred review on the topic after reading the literature with both depth and breadth in only two weeks time. Although not a math major in his undergraduate years, he made up for his inadequacies readily by reviewing introductory textbooks on the subject. I was also impressed by his computer skills in Windows, Internet and FORTRAN programming. Moreover, he learned to use the SAS software swiftly and became a good teaching assistant in the online practice session for our master students. As a result, he conducted his research with high efficiency and accuracy.

Industrious, intelligent, inspirited, and that is not all of him. Adding to his merits are teamwork, good sense of humor and good organization, which surely qualify him as a good researcher. I trust that he will become an excellent student and assistant when admitted to your program. I also have this strong belief that he will become an outstanding public health scientist in the future. Hence my unreserved recommendation. Your favorable consideration will be highly appreciated.

Chapter 13 Chaoli Wang, Ohio State University

Chaoli Wang's Profile

Name	Wang, Chaoli
Gender	Male
Graduate	ME, Computer Application Technology, Fuzhou University, 2001
Undergraduate	BE, Computer Application Technology, Fuzhou University, 1998
Scores	GRE: V700, Q800, A670; TOEFL: 633; TWE: 5.0; GPA: (G)3.85, (U)3.7
Publications	Yes

Universities Applied	Major	Degree	Result
Arizona State University	Computer Science	Ph.D.	Admission
Boston University	Computer Science	Ph.D.	Admission
Clemson University	Computer Science	Ph.D.	Admission
Case Western Reserve University	Computer Science	Ph.D.	
College of William and Mary	Computer Science	Ph.D.	
Dartmouth College	Computer Science	Ph.D.	
National University of Singapore	Computer Science	Ph.D.	Fellowship
Northwestern University	Computer Science	Ph.D.	
Ohio State University	**Computer Science**	**Ph.D.**	**Fellowship**
SUNY, Binghamton	Computer Science	Ph.D.	Waiting
Syracuse University	Computer Science	Ph.D.	Admission
University of California, Irvine	Computer Science	Ph.D.	
University of California, Riverside	Computer Science	Ph.D.	Waiting
University of Florida	Computer Science	Ph.D.	Admission
University of Massachusetts, Amherst	Computer Science	Ph.D.	
University of Nebraska Lincoln	Computer Science	Ph.D.	TA

Interview with Chaoli Wang

MicroEdu: Chaoli, happy to hear that your success has greatly encouraged people around you in your university! When did you first think of studying abroad? Why was the idea tempting?

Chaoli: Yes, my success with the application gave them a good example for their future applications. But it was not an easy road. I hope to give them further help as much as I can.

I first thought of studying abroad when I began the master program in Fuzhou University. One of my former classmates in high school, Zhang Yu, went to Duke University in 1998. She graduated from Peking University that summer. Before that, I seldom thought of going abroad. But her example inspired me. I believed that pursuing advanced study abroad would contribute to my development and future career. Since then I decided to prepare for the GRE and TOFEL tests and carried out my plan step by step.

MicroEdu: So you made an early plan. Fuzhou University is not so well known compared with some other universities in China. And Computer Science is such a competitive major. Were you confident in getting offers before applying?

Chaoli: I think anyone from less famous schools, such as Fuzhou University, if he has other advantages, can still stand out among applicants and realize the dream of studying abroad. As for me, I think my advantage was that I was always a top student in my undergraduate and graduate study. That is what the department head told me in the offer letter.

MicroEdu: Can you tell us a bit more of your research interest at Ohio State University and your future plans?

Chaoli: I will focus my research on Computer Vision, which is an interdisciplinary area between Computer Graphics and Artificial Intelligence. The Ph.D. study will last for five to six years as indicated in the I-20 form, but I hope I can finish it in less time.

Computer Vision is a new and promising area. We try to pursue a unified computational theory underlying visual perception and learning, as well as highly intelligent computer systems that can understand real world imagery and interact with people and the real world environment. It can be used in many fields; one of them is in robots. I have several research experiences in computer graphics. My former academic advisor, Professor Fu, is an expert in this area. In addition, I like Artificial Intelligence. So, I chose Computer Vision as my specified field of study. I hope I will do well in this field. Right now, I have no concrete plan after graduation. But I would prefer to continue my research work, if permitted. I'd like to be a researcher.

MicroEdu: What were your criteria in selecting schools? What makes you interested in the computer science program at Ohio State University?

Chaoli: As for selecting a school, basically, I have three standards on judging a school. First, it should have good general reputation. Next, the graduate program in my field should have a good ranking too. Last, (and perhaps the most important), I should be sure that the program there is really suitable for me.

I think an applicant should be clear that the area he chooses now is really what he wants to study in the future. After all, I think it is unwise to select an area you do not like and have to change later. Indeed, a transfer is easy according to some people. But I think it may not be the best for himself.

From its web pages and brochure, I got to know that the CS program at Ohio State University fits my interest very well. I also get some advice from my friends and from a Chinese American professor. This professor of mathematics is from Missouri. He visited our university in May 2000. My academic advisor. Professor Fu knows him very well and he introduced me to this professor. I was lucky to get suggestions from this professor since he knows the development of Computer Science in the US. Additionally, while I was preparing for my exams in Beijing last summer, Li, one of my classmates, told me that he had a schoolmate who was pursuing her Ph.D. degree in Chemistry in OSU. She said that Ohio State University was a good state university, both in academic standards and living environment. She encouraged him to apply to this school.

MicroEdu: Can you tell what kind of suggestions you get from the professor and from your former schoolmate Zhang Yu, who is now at Duke? They both should have some insider's information for you?

Chaoli: From the professor, I learned that some fields such as graphics and network are hot and there is much to be done in these fields. You know, the Computer Vision is closely related to graphics. Zhang Yu really helped me a lot, for example, helping me correct my application materials, such as the personal statement. But she doesn't know much about CS since her major is biology.

MicroEdu: Did you ever worry that it could be very competitive? What's your strength or winning strategy?

Chaoli: I knew it would be competitive. As a matter of fact, the major of CS is very competitive. But I believe I will do well. If there is strength, I think it is the fact that my academic background and my interest fit their program very well. My academic record is outstanding for nearly seven years of college study. Also, matching interest is very important too. If you are excellent, but your interest is not theirs, they will probably deny your application.

MicroEdu: You said just now your research interest is in line with the interest of the department. Can you explain a little further, such as your research background and the qualifications the admissions committee looks for?

Chaoli: I finished 3 research projects and wrote 2 papers in my graduate study. One of the projects

is the development of a City Guide System. In this project, I designed an algorithm regarding the shortest path based on the minimum transfer times of any two bus-stations within a city. The idea really works. It can respond within seconds in the real Internet environment.

As for the qualifications, I think that you should have a solid background in your field and abundant research experience. They are inclined to have that type of student as their assistants in their research.

MicroEdu: Looking back at all the efforts you made on your application, what lessons did you learn?

Chaoli: First, just as a proverb goes: to know what you want is half the battle. Before I knew that my former classmate, Zhang Yu, went to Duke to pursue her PhD degree, I had given some thought about studying abroad, but I never thought that I could nor that I would do well on the TOEFL and GRE tests. I did not even know where to take these tests. At that time, they were far beyond me.

As you may know, few students in our Fuzhou University took these tests before, so I had a feeling that it might be "mission impossible" for me. But things changed after I got the news. I believed that I could at least have a try.

Now, I have succeeded. I would like to tell students as I was two years ago, you won't lose anything by trying, but if you don't try you will never know if you could have succeeded. That would be worse than trying and failing because you will always be sorry for missing out on the opportunities.

Secondly, whatever I do, I feel I must do it whole-heartedly. Perseverance is the key to success. Some of my classmates also took the TOEFL test. But their attempts to pursue study abroad ceased for this or that kind of reason. That is the very difference between them and me. If I make up my mind to do something, I will carry out my plan from the beginning to the end and never let it be disturbed by tempting but transient factors. In the end, even if I faile, I will have learned a lot from the experience.

During the whole application process, I always had a strong feeling that I am a lucky one. I have a considerate academic advisor who helped me achieve my goal. I have good friends who gave me timely suggestions and advice, and I had my whole family supporting me. And last, the Ohio State University chose me.

MicroEdu: Very inspirational! What will be your suggestion to students of computer science, especially to those who are from undistinguished schools?

Chaoli: Carry out your application plan step by step, even though you feel that hope is gone, you will attain what you want in the end. I like this sentence "believe who you are, you are a shining star!"

Select the field you really love, not the field where you can earn more money after graduation. From my personal experience, I think there is not a big gap between students in key and non-key universities in the mind of professors in the USA. Do not feel that you are at a disadvantage.
You can change it.

MicroEdu: Thank you, Chaoli! I believe you will keep dreaming and trying. And your intelligence and perseverance will reward you greater success. It was a pleasant talk with a friendly guy who enjoys helping others.

Statement of Intent

As a top graduate student majoring in Computer Science, I would like to further develop myself academically and professionally by undertaking Ph.D. studies in your distinguished program, so that I could build up an even more successful research career on my already strong academic background.

Fascinated by the magic power of the computer since high school, I chose Computer Science as my major when I went to college. In 1994, I gained acceptance into the Fuzhou University (FZU), one of the best 100 institutions of higher learning in China.

During my undergraduate studies, I strove academically and acquired systematic and comprehensive training in the groundwork of mathematics and computer science. I have always been the undisputed academic leader in my undergraduate class. My overall GPA is 88.5%, ranking first among my class of 125. While enjoying all my courses, I also cherished every opportunity in each course project. Combining theory with practice deepened my understanding of textbook knowledge and enriched my hands-on experience.

In addition, I actively involved myself in a variety of school activities. I was once a member of the Class Committee and the Student Union of the department. I also served as the director of the Student Computer Exchange Center of FZU, and successfully launched the First Computer Programming Design Contest cross the universities in the city of Fuzhou in 1997. Such involvement in the student affairs sharpened my skills in leadership, organization and communication.

On the strength of my outstanding performance, I entered the graduate program at FZU in 1998, waived of the entrance examination. Majoring in Computer Application, my graduate education so far can also be characterized by preeminence. Devoted and hardworking, I achieved an overall GPA of 90.5%, ranked me the first in my class of 21. In recognition of my consistent excellence, I was decorated with many honors and scholarships for consecutive years, including the Excellent Student Honor, Undergraduate Scholarship, Fuguang Scholarship, the Excellent Graduate Honor, Graduate Scholarship and Nokia Scholarship.

The most significant part of my graduate studies is perhaps in the research projects led by my advisor, Professor Fu. In 1998, I was chosen by him as one of the main researchers in his project "Juyi Integrated Services Platform for Real Estate Information based on Geographic Information System (GIS)", supported by the Fujian Science and Technology Commission. As the team leader, I was in charge of the whole system analysis and design. In a timely and successful manner, I gathered related information and analyzed possible schemes. On the other hand, I exchanged ideas with other researchers and coordinated the designing team. There were frustrating moments of course, but I was always able to come up with creative solutions and made significant headway in the research. This experience served as the foundation of my research career, as it taught me how to be a serious scientific researcher and an excellent team leader.

Last summer, I participated in another project directed by Professor Fu, "City Guide System based on WWW," which is supported by China Telecom. My share of the responsibility in the project was to develop the modules of data format transformation and data encryption, and design a key algorithm regarding the shortest path based on the minimum transfer times of any two bus stations within the city. Under the guidance of Professor Fu, I contrived the algorithm that could respond within several seconds in the real Internet environment. Our fruit, the website (www. cityguide.net.cn) was quite a hit for its original idea and superior performance. Within months, it began to enjoy a wide recognition.

In cooperation with Professor Fu, I have finished two academic theses. The first one, "Some Technical Problems in the Implementation of GIS Application System", based on the project mentioned above, was accepted by the Journal of Fuzhou University. And the second one, "An Optimal Algorithm for Gallery Shortest Path Problem," supported by NKBRSF of China (No. G1998030600), was submitted to Computational Geometry Theory and Applications for possible publication. In this thesis, we propose an algorithm for the gallery shortest path problem that is typical in the game software, and show its correctness as well as optimality in the worst-case sense.

The challenges I met and the successes I achieved have not only endowed me with confidence but also fired up my desire for further studies abroad. After carefully comparing the strengths of many universities, I find Ohio State University is particularly suited for my purpose. As a world-famous university, your university has a top-class faculty, advanced research facilities and a stimulating academic atmosphere, all very conducive to the development of my academic career. I believe that I can count on your faculty's help while I seek to make great contributions to the development of computer science.

I would like to concentrate my Ph.D. studies in the following areas: Algorithm, Computational Geometry, Computer Graphics, Image Processing, Databases, Software Engineering and Computer Architecture. Equipped with the ability to teach myself and conduct independent research, I am also confident that I am able to attain competence quickly in any new area.

Upon completion of my Ph.D. program, I will return to my homeland to work at a university or research institute and strive to make scientific contributions that both your university and I can be proud of. In view of my academic strength and career desire, I trust that you will consider my application favorably.

Chapter 14 Lin Jian, University of California, Berkeley

Lin Jiang's Profile

Name	Jian, Lin
Gender	Female
Undergraduate	BS, Computer Science, A Small American College, 2001
Scores	GRE: 2330; TOEFL: 287/300 (CAT): TWE: 6.0; GPA: N/A
Publications	NO

Universities Applied	Major	Degree	Result
Boston University	N/A	Master	Admission
Columbia University	N/A	Master	Admission
Ohio State University	Computer Science	Ph.D.	
Stevens Institute of Technology	N/A	Master	Admission
Syracuse University	N/A	Master	Admission
University of California, Berkeley	Information Science	Master	Partial Aid
University of Michigan, Ann Arbor	N/A	Master	Admission
University of Pittsburgh	N/A	Master	Admission
University of Southern California	N/A	Master	

Interview with Lin Jiang

MicroEdu: Lin, you have already moved to Berkeley. Can you take a snapshot of the campus as well as your life there?

Lin: Sometimes I think Berkeley is contradictory. It's so expensive yet it seems to be the only place I want to be while still young (and poor). On my way to work I come down the hill with breathtaking views of the Golden Gate Bridge and the Bay. Besides working from 9 to 5 everyday, I have undertaken a second full-time job: house hunting. Without doubt, this process is as stressful, if not more, as the application itself. I visited so many places, handed in so many tenant resume/credit reports, and got rejected so many times that if I have to pay an application fee for every rental, I would have burned a hole in my banking account.

But looking at the brighter side, now I am much more familiar with the campus, the city, the main bus routes and the fact that buses are never on time after 7. The getting-to-the-place is an unofficial tour itself, and the buildings of Berkeley strike me as colorful and full of personality as the people here. Having seen so many "good, bad, and the ugly" places, I know pretty much what I want for a room and a roommate, which I did not before. All I thought about then was for a room closer to campus with a female roommate who doesn't mind occasional kitchen disasters resulting from my attempted Chinese cooking, but there is a lot more to consider when it comes to making a place one's permanent home.

MicroEdu: So it looks like searching for the right place either for a room to stay or a school to study is a process of knowing what you really want and what the place has to offer. Interesting! When you started to apply for graduate programs, you told yourself that you were on a road of no return. Why were you so determined?

Lin: As an undergraduate, I studied Computer Science, a major that was highly sought after by Chinese students, and a majority of them are much brighter, more talented and studious than I. The college I went to is unheard of even to people who live 75 miles outside of town. Based on the above two facts, if I ever want to go back to China or work here, I won't stand very strong in front of all those more deserving such as those with a diploma from MIT or UIUC. Therefore I was determined to put my 100% effort into the graduate application.

MicroEdu: So, to some extent, your worry really came from the fact that you wanted to get an offer from your dream school, right? So who are competing for those schools and why are you not optimistic about yourself?

Lin: Well, I think anyone in my position, as explained above, would not be too optimistic about getting offers. My worries are very sensible. The competition is not only with students who graduated at the top of their class from an American institution, but also with applicants already holding an MS degree from India Institute of Technology and Tsinghua University. Of course, there are always those with years of hands-on experience working or researching in the very field

where I am trying to earn a degree.

MicroEdu: How did you start your application? Did you bear those weaknesses in mind and keep seeking ways to strengthen your competitiveness?

Lin: I started by narrowing down the schools. My two criteria were whether the school has my major and the location. I applied for three majors: computer science, information management and telecommunications engineering. The majority of the programs for which I applied are MS degree programs, and the reason I didn't apply for many Ph.D. programs is straightforward: I can't even convince myself that I am capable or committed. I think I have somewhat more of an advantage in Information Management because it's less technical and most of the programs indicate that they are seeking people of all backgrounds. With a degree in computer science, I am a step ahead when it comes to the "Information" part of the program. Besides working on a shining portfolio containing GPA, standard test scores, transcript and recommendation letters and my personal statement, I emphasized four things: one, the attractiveness of the program's interdisciplinary nature; two, the few projects I've done in the past, each of which exemplifies my proficiency in the pure technical, the planning, and the overall management of a project; three, my ability to maintain academic and social responsibilities, and four, my career goals and how they tie closely with MS study.

MicroEdu: So it seems "Information System Management" can be a good choice for those who have a Computer Science background. Can you introduce this program a bit more and its prospect? Is it true this program does not always provide financial aid especially to master candidates?

Lin: In my understanding. Information Management is to Computer Science as a building's blueprint is to the actual construction. Of course, that is not to say, there isn't management, planning, policy considerations in Computer Science; rather, it is more emphasized in Information Management. There are roughly divided areas in IMS that address issues like cognitive and behavioral aspects of information creation, seeking, retrieving, transfer, organization and representation of information. Also, strategic uses and marketing of information, economic methods for decision-making, human computer interaction, specific technology, policy and law.

I think, getting financial assistance in general is harder for people who will earn an MS as the terminal degree, provided that applicants to both MS-only and Ph.D. programs are fully qualified. The Ph.D. students will stay with the department longer, contributing to advanced research and sharing teaching responsibilities. On the other hand, the expectation of the MS Students is limited to finishing a certain number of courses and a thesis. As for specific majors, I can't really say which major has a better chance in getting financial assistance at the MS level. It's difficult in Computer Science and Information Management.

MicroEdu: Do you still recall any particular tough experience now?

Lin: Although hard to believe, my most stressful experience happened after I submitted all my

applications. I went on a phone-marathon that cost me a fortune on phone cards for calling admission offices and the ETS, all of which loved to put me on hold to listen to elevator music for long periods ranging from 15 to 40 minutes. There was much confusion and many mistakes that made me feel completely hopeless. For example, one school had mistakenly used my first name as my last name, so they made a folder with the wrong name that contained nothing because none of the recommendations, transcripts or test scores matched this wrong name! It wasn't until late March that I found out what was going on. And, my undergraduate school used my student ID on the transcript while two schools used my Social Security Number, so again my documents were in two different folders. I was told that certain documents were never received. And of course, on top of everything, ETS sent my score to the wrong schools. I would rather not recall this episode. Let's not go there.

MicroEdu: Okay, let's look ahead! Can you tell us your plan after graduation?

Lin: I will probably work for a company in the US for sometime, up to five years. With enough experience and some money, I want to see other parts of the world and places where I've never been in China. The advantage of a technical degree is that the job is universally understood to a large extent. At this point, I can't say that I have a definite plan for life down the road, but hopefully I will know then.

MicroEdu: Many people say it will be easier to apply if the applicant is in the US. Is this true?

Lin: If you are in the States, it's easier to get in touch with the designated personnel who are in charge of the graduate application. You can always call them and the ETS, given that you have a tremendous amount of patience. Postal services are also faster and more reliable. For example, you can pay 50 cents (I think) to check the status of your mail, when it is delivered by priority mail. People who finished their undergraduate degrees in the US don't have to take the TOEFL/ TSE exam, and they are also more familiar with the US higher education system. If they are really lucky, their academic advisor may know some big shots at their prospective schools, and the recommendation letter will definitely carry such weight.

No matter where you are physically, I think the most important thing is to communicate clearly, whether to ETS, the Admissions officers, or the professors. With email, this mode of communication isn't as costly as phoning for people who are not in the US.

MicroEdu: Lin, I am deeply impressed by some of your posts and your profile named "25 Items" published at MicroEdu.com. I see you keenly enjoy movies, which reflect life and human nature. And once you said, "I will never get what I really want, never ever." Are you an idealistic type? How did you handle those earthly matters especially when you came to the US at a rather young age?

Lin: I have certain expectations for life that have never changed since I was in middle school. This no-compromise attitude has done more harm than good to me. There are also things that I

finally understood along the way which I used to take for granted, so sometimes I wish I could go back in time and relive life with this knowledge. Of course, this will never happen. (In case you are wondering why I said that line.)

As a newcomer to the US, I was faced with two overwhelmingly difficult tasks: communicating in English and making money to go to school. They were just like hunger and cold that had a way of simplifying everything, and I did everything to make ends meet. This is a new country and nobody knows me, so I am fully responsible for the life I am about to live. Inevitably there were slow and painful changes. I used to be a very introverted person, always thinking that I had all the answers to everything, but I gradually learned to be open and to communicate clearly what it is that I want help with. When things get really ugly and tough, I always call my Mom and listen to her saying "there is no hardship that can not be endured", following with the tale of my Dad leaving home at the age of 11. Just the sound of her voice has the magical power to calm and recharge me. Over the years, I have also situated myself in a support group composed of good friends, professors, and people who care about and sympathize with students like me. Looking back, I can't really recall any extremely difficult "earthly matters" that I couldn't handle.

Here are my two cents for people who will come to the US for the first time: be patient and take one day at a time. Things do and will get better. Always keep in mind that you are not alone and never feel ashamed to seek help or advice from friends.

MicroEdu: How are you going to afford your living expenses at Berkeley, the part not covered in the offer?

Lin: I am working full-time in the summer, and I will have an on-campus job when the fall semester begins. At the same time, I will look out for all possible grants or scholarships. I am sure I will survive.

MicroEdu: What suggestions will you give to applicants of Information Science? Promising as the study is, more and more Chinese students may wish to study it.

Lin: If Information Science is what you want to major in, you might want to take a wide range of classes in college, computer science, business, economics, math, political science, mass communications, and English. Be very familiar with at least one high-level programming language, such as Java or C++. Read technical magazines and major newspapers (online). Due to the managerial expectation and the large amount of teamwork, you should also develop good interpersonal skills, such as actively participating in on-campus activities, taking leadership roles.

MicroEdu: Thank you for your pertinent suggestions. Lin, I am proud of you and your personal endeavors along the road. Wish you a splendid future!

Statement of Purpose

My undergraduate years as a computer science major have successfully trained me for performing individual projects and preparing me for further research in a specialized field. With a solid background in technical areas, I wish to further develop my skills and broaden my knowledge in information systems, particularly in the area of network information systems and telecommunications policy. By applying SIMS's interdisciplinary approach to the specific technical aspects and thorough analysis of managerial and socioeconomic factors, I will prepare myself to serve as an efficient information analyst or manager for businesses expanding into global arenas.

My undergraduate studies provided a working foundation in all subjects concerning computer science. I took a variety of courses and distinguished myself as one of the top students in my class. I learned the basic concepts and technologies from both the class lectures and lab projects. These projects sometimes incorporated real-world cases, which helped to hone my skills in planning and decision making. In the Theory of Data Communications class, we, as a group, researched the user's needs for a new technology, layer 3 switching, and the feasibility of combining this new technology with the existing campus network. By comparing different telecommunications vendors' products and services, we made both short-term and long-term plans to ensure maximum productivity and cost-efficiency. I realized that in the information technology (IT) field, management and planning are equally important when compared with technical expertise.

Armed with sound training in basic theories and applied technologies, I have put them into practice by participating in on-campus activities and summer internships. As the secretary for the Blue Key National Honor Society I designed a user-friendly database for record keeping. I also created and maintained web sites for two campus organizations in which I am involved, the International Student Organization and the student chapter of the Mathematical Association of America. Through these projects, I learned HTML, JavaScript, Peril, and image editing. In my first summer internship, I designed and implemented a relational media management database in C and SQL for ALI, a database consulting company based in Aiken, SC. The following summer, with sponsorship from the Program for Women in Science and Engineering (PWSE), I developed an online shopping cart application in Peril and JavaScript for the Genetics Lab at Iowa State University. Presenting information with users needs in mind is one of the most valuable skills learned along with problem-solving techniques, creativity, teamwork and technical communication skills. These experiences deepened my understanding in working in the IT field and further strengthened my goal of becoming a successful IT professional.

During my junior year, for an independent study. I worked on a project that required overall planning and detailed implementation. The goal was to implement the networking lab with secure remote access for off-campus students. I was initially overwhelmed by the amount of information concerning technologies for secure remote access. Under the guidance of my advisor, Dr. Joseph Sloan, I investigated the feasibility of several technologies and completed a detailed assessment of the requirements (network services, amount of security required, existing equipment, access

volume, future plans, etc). The best solution, meeting all requirements, was a Virtual Private Network (VPN) using Microsoft PPTP. Besides applying knowledge I learned from classes, I also explored other networking technologies, such as configuring the route to perform Network Address Translation (NAT) and Access Control. Kerberos Encryption was also applied for further authentication. Gradually I developed the ability to administer, manage and troubleshoot both physical and operational aspects of the networks. Although implementation, testing, and evaluation were important to the project, the initial design phase benefited me the most. This experience taught me that it is essential to keep a specific goal when faced with many possibilities.

I am currently enrolled in a yearlong software engineering course. Our group is designing a program that enables an end user to construct packets and send them to a user-specified destination with great flexibility. Once the program is completed, it can be utilized as a teaching aid and/or networking research tool. My responsibility is to design and implement the Graphic User Interface (GUI) in Java.

Because the IT field demands a broad range of fundamental knowledge, not just computer science, it is necessary to be versed in many subjects. In fact, it was a term paper for a macroeconomics course that further refined my long-term career goals. My term paper examined the impact of China's bilateral trade agreement with the US regarding China's entry intc the WTO. According to the agreement, US companies can have a 49% share in joint ventures in industries such as telecommunications. For China, it poses a threat to the native IT/ telecommunications industries, which may lose business to more competent foreign industries with cheaper services. In order to expedite and meet the challenges issuing from China's WTO membership, local industries will evolve rapidly and dramatically with changes in the economy, ownership structure, policy and advances in technology. For me, a native Chinese student studying information technology and management, the current situation in China provides ample opportunities. Upon completion of my degree from SIMS, I would like to apply my knowledge to work as an information analyst/manager for a company in North America with business outlets to China. After gaining sufficient working experience in a large corporation, I will return to China and work for a Chinese company. I am very eager to be a liaison in China's dynamic transition to a nation characterized by the efficient use of information technology.

In order to realize my goal, I need to pursue an advanced education. I am especially enthusiastic about SIMS's diverse faculty and student background, well-designed curriculum, and opportunities to participate in leading-edge research. Berkeley, California is an excellent environment for learning and practicing information technology. It is noted for its superb academic resources and proximity to leading firms in the IT field. My special area of interest is Networked Information System and Information Organization. I see a possible match with Dr. John Chuang's research in network technologies and telecommunications policy. Descriptions of Dr. Doug Ygar's work in security and e-commerce also pique my interest. I am open to working under other professors involving all aspects of information systems.

To better prepare myself for your program, I will take an Organizational Management class next semester. I do realize that my background lacks knowledge in certain fields. However, my

motivation to succeed is reflected in my outstanding academic preparation, extensive experience, and vision for the future. I believe that these attributes, combined with my defined purpose and willingness to learn about all aspects of information systems, will guide my success as a graduate student at the University of California, Berkeley.

My 11% Success with Berkeley

Introduction

Statistically speaking, I only had a 10% success rate in getting financial assistance, but I did end up going to my favorite school, UC- Berkeley. I consider that my biggest success! Several factors contributed to my low success rate: my major (I applied to several computer science programs), my lack of experience and publication, and my terminal degree (MS instead of Ph.D.) Here, I will try to concentrate on the positive things I did that helped me get the offer from Berkeley.

Willpower and Remaining Goal-oriented

Before getting to the nitty-gritty details of my application, I would like to emphasize the importance of getting yourself mentally prepared. Take me for example, my reason for going to graduate school was very straightforward: I simply had no other choice. I did not like my major very much. I would really resent it if I had to go into the job market and glue my eyes to a computer screen 8 hours a day. Therefore, I wanted to find a program that will broaden my understanding of the IT industry. Graduate school appealed to me so much as a long journey to self-discovery. Many experts consider my endeavor a wrong reason for applying, but at least that was my honest opinion. Once my mind was made up, I told myself that this was a road with no return and no matter how difficult the road became, I would stay focused and remain strong.

The gory details of the application process will overwhelm any first time applicants. I was applying to 10 programs during the last year of college. The list of overwhelming factors included, but was not limited to, enormous academic pressure, long hours of drilling for the GRE, inevitable mistakes made by inefficient university administrators and ETS that took forever to correct, hours and hours spent on writing and rewriting the essay, the never-ending anxious anticipation of what my professors would write about me in their recommendation letters, and o course the scary question, what if I don't get an offer from anywhere? To keep myself from going insane or becoming extremely depressed, I had to repetitively tell myself, stay focused. What effort I give would be returned, and though hard to believe, the process will eventually end

Research Schools

Honestly speaking, the biggest factor that narrowed down my list of potential schools was location, location, and location. I knew I would be much happier in a metropolitan setting in the vicinity to mountains, lakes, and if possible the ocean. Again, experts categorize this as one of the, less important factors when choosing a program, but I think we should be honest with ourselves instead of living according to the rules set by other people. What do you want to do for the next two to five years? Do you like quiet rural areas or the hustle and bustle of city life? I did find schools achieving fine balance between a quality academic program and a beautiful surrounding. An added benefit of big cities is, of course, more opportunities, whether it is related to my academic, career, or personal goals.

Besides researching financial assistantships, department size, graduate student enrollment, faculty research interests, and career outlook, I visited graduate student's home pages, a MUST for

gaining an insider's view of current research and graduate student participation. I also got a better idea of where ! stood in the pool of applicants by looking at other information such as: the student's undergraduate school, degree, and research/publications done BEFORE entering graduate school. For example, I initially set my heart on the University of Washington in Seattle, but after visiting their graduate students' home pages, I realized I was not ready with only a BS degree and very limited experience, and it would simply be a waste of time and money to apply.

Get Organized and Pay Attention to Details

Since I was applying to 10 programs, I made a chart on a poster board and posted it on my dorm room wall. The chart included a table with information divided into columns such as program name, application deadline, application fee, personal statement, resume, recommendation letters (request date and receipt date), transcript (request date and receipt date), financial support documents (request date and receipt date), GRE (test date, score request date), and notes. I also used 10 folders to store various paperwork for each program, and carefully dated everything to keep track of my application progress. You will really appreciate it when it is time to submit your application. It helps to keep records of what is sent and when in the upcoming postal chaos.

Application requirements differ substantially among programs, and the last thing you want to do is to make mistakes on simple things, such as forgetting to sign your name, forgetting to make required copies of certain forms, stapling instead of using paper clips for the application, typing instead of printing, misspelling things on the form, etc. All these mishaps can be avoided if you follow the instructions and write down each program's specific requirements along with what is preferred. Be meticulous about filling out the forms. Just remember that the person at these schools is reading thousands of the same thing everyday, and you don't want to screw up your first impression by being careless.

GRE and Personal Statement

What is the most important factor for admission? There is the strongly-held, widely-perpetuated belief that, "don't even think about the competitive programs if your GRE is not 2250 and higher," but in MicroEdu and elsewhere, I have heard or witnessed people who succeeded against all odds. However, that is not to say that the GRE is not important. Rather, it is the grand sum of all the things to supplement items beyond your control that will make the biggest difference.

Before taking the GRE, I thought about the above question often, and here was my analysis:

(1) Undergraduate institution (probably unheard of by any of the schools I am applying to)
(2) Undergraduate GPA (overall good, but shaky in some specific courses)
(3) Recommendation letters (will be written by my professors and hopefully positive)
(4) Background and publications in my major (weak, no time for any publications)
(5) GRE (unknown)
(6) Personal Statement (unknown)

So you see, there is nothing I could do for the first four factors at the time of my application.

Later I read on MicroEdu that somebody got a 2400 on the GRE. Although I know the GRE isn't everything, I still said to myself, "hey I would not mind getting a 2400 on the GRE!" The higher the better, and if I do not get a score as high as that, there are other things to offset the mediocre

score. I could work on two things to improve my overall image in front of the admissions committee: my GRE score and my Personal Statement.

Knowing where I was headed, I spent 3 months studying for the GRE relentlessly. The preparation for the GRE was indeed a process that will either make you or break you. I believe there is no point in me elaborating on study skills or strategies since most of you have endured it at least once. I ended up getting a good score, and that encouraged me to apply to some more competitive programs, such as the University of Michigan and eventually UC-Berkeley. "Aim high," my professor told me. If you don't apply, you dearly won't be considered. I decided to give Berkeley a try.

The next thing that was within my control was formulating a good personal statement. I strongly suggest that you start writing it as early as possible and work on your top choice school fzrst. At least that was my strategy. I started working on my essay in mid November, on and off, totaling at least 10 drafts until my final submission on January 1. Trust me, no matter how many times you revise the essay, there is always room for improvement. During the long application process, if you constantly keep the thought "write a good PS" on the top of your agenda, great ideas will come to you eventually, but inspiration takes time to materialize.

I concentrated on my essay to Berkeley as if it was my only choice. I read everything on the Berkeley web site about my prospective department, faculty's research interests, student web pages, course descriptions, involvement with the industry, and the final project. I read many articles in MicroEdu about different structures for the PS, but I did not have much insight in the field, let alone publications! I also lacked REAL working experience, or something in the extent of research. I did have a lot of leadership experience, but my essay was already unbearably long, I found it hard to relate my leadership roles to future research work. After a considerable amount of thinking, I decided to emphasize four things: one, the importance of the program's interdisciplinary nature, two, what I learned from my past experience and how they will help me to succeed in the program, three, my ability to maintain academic and social responsibilities, and four, my career goals and how they tie closely with MS study.

No matter what you do, always remember, be confident! You must convince yourself that you are ready for the program before you can convince the admissions committee.

In the end, I simply followed the standard format of (purpose)-(preparation)-(goal)-(the school is super)-(please accept me). I then used the final draft as the template for all my other essays, tailoring each to their respective programs. It probably did not work well with the Ph.D. applications in Computer Science. I simply don't have the "hardware" to be a Ph.D. candidate, nor did I have the heart for it.

Communication

For my particular background and degree, I did not contact any professors; I just did not know what to say. I have no research background and did not understand very much of their research work. However, I did write the graduate school personnel extensively. Before submitting of my

application, I requested information and asked about certain requirements. After the submission, I asked about my application status and whether ETS had sent my score reports and such. One important strategy was, NEVER write to e-mail addresses like gradadmin@whatever.edu, as you are bound to receive an electronic reply that will not address your specific problems. Instead, write to a specific person. Look very carefully on the department web pages, and find the e-mail address for the department secretary, MS/Ph.D. program coordinator, or graduate admissions assistant. Don't write to the dean or professors about administrative matters. This is a process full of trial-and-error. Sometimes, you will get a message that says "please direct your questions to so-and-so," but that is one step closer to where you were. A lot of times people will not reply immediately, so just give it three or four days and send the same message with a different opening paragraph. I had emailed one secretary five times for one question, and eventually she replied.
Be persistent-- remember Andy Dufresne in the Shawshank Redemption? That's the spirit! Don't feel bad about bothering these people. It is their JOB to answer your questions. Of course always be courteous and let them know you appreciate their help greatly.

Waiting

Like everyone else, I spent at least two months in anxiety waiting, and going through the cycle of self-doubt and self-reconstruction. Eventually, when Berkeley's offer came, I did not even wait for the other five schools' replies and confirmed my enrollment immediately. It was not a tough choice for me at all.

Things That I Wish I Had Done...

1. I relied too much on information posted on the web, and sometimes the information was outdated. I should have asked every single school about availability of financial assistance for MS candidates. It turned out that six of the MS programs don't offer any form of aid for MS students. The relevant information posted on the web was very vague, but I was just too optimistic to clarify. My heart aches for all the money that I wasted.
2. As a follow-up to the above lesson, I could have written the department/graduate School about waiving my TOEFL exam since I would have a diploma from an American university. Instead, I read the information on the web site religiously, which said, "All students with English as their second language are required to take the TOEFL." Only after I took the TOEFL did I find out that the test could be waived. I could have saved myself a lot of money and time.

Chapter 15 Li Xiang, University of Washington

Li Xiang's Profile

Name	Xiang, Li
Gender	Male
Undergraduate	BA, Economics, Peking University, 2000
Scores	GRE: 2310; TOEFL: 637; TWE: 5.0; GPA: 3.7
Publications	NO

Universities Applied	**Major**	**Degree**	**Result**
Duke University	Economics	Ph.D.	
Indiana University	Economics	Ph.D.	
George Washington University	Economics	Ph.D.	Admission
Northwestern University	Economics	Ph.D.	
Ohio State University	Economics	Ph.D.	Admission
Pennsylvania State University	Economics	Ph.D.	
Syracuse University	Economics	Ph.D.	
University of California, Los Angeles	Economics	Ph.D.	Admission
University Pennsylvania	Economics	Ph.D.	Admission
University of Southern California	Economics	Ph.D.	Admission
University of Washington	Economics	Ph.D.	Fellowship + TA
Vanderbilt University	Economics	Ph.D.	Fellowship
Virginia Institute of Technology	Economics	Ph.D.	
Washington University, St. Louis	Economics	Ph.D.	

Interview with Li Xiang

MicroEdu: Congratulations on your success, Xiang Li! Two years ago when you graduated from the economics department, Peking University, you had a bunch of choices like continuing education in a nice graduate school in China or finding a decent job. You gave them up for the goal of studying abroad. Unluckily, you did not get an offer last year. May I know what drove you to hold on and try for another year? I guess it won't be a very pleasant experience when you have to do all these alone at home.

Li: What urged me to hold on for a second endeavor? Mainly because I wanted to prove something. After mentally suffering this greatest failure I ever had in life, I thoroughly introspected myself and finally concluded that I should blame no one but myself. My tragedy was just God's revenge for my past indulgence, carelessness and weakness in will power. Also, I never cast any doubt on my own talent and ability. So I decided to stand up from where I had fallen, confront a bigger challenge and thus regain my lost vigor, enterprise and true self. It seemed to me that other choices were merely some kind of illusion, and only in this way could I totally clean up such a big shame and demonstrate my own value.

Secondly, after my failure, by studying several fresh economics courses and reading some intriguing economics works, I suddenly found out that economics was not so disgusting and formidable as I had thought. In fact, I came to like it again and was ready to learn more. This change in my attitude also strengthened my determination.

MicroEdu: You seem to imply that economics was dreadful for you when you had already decided to commit to economics one year ago. Do you wish to tell us more about this sudden change of attitude? Does this change also affect your long-term goal?

LI: Yes, when I prepared to launch my first application, my heart was still occupied by contradiction and hesitation. Since high school, I did not like mathematics although I could do fairly well with it. Just thinking I had to meet with my foe everyday during my US graduate studies, I felt sick. Moreover, everybody said that the promise of placement for an economics Ph.D. was bad, which completely swept away the remaining little interest and passion toward my major!

But my attitude changed not long after my bitter failure, that was, before my graduation. Just now, I have told you why I decided to try again at that time. To place my second application in a more advantageous position, I took some advanced economics and mathematics courses. At the same time I worked on my graduation thesis and thus was exposed to some of the latest economics papers and documents. Now I think there exists a rule: if people could really calm down and investigate deeply into a certain subject, most probably they will find something special, interesting and significant, even if they had a negative attitude toward it before. At least this rule took effect on me: my interest on my major was lighted up again! And mathematics, after perceiving its beautiful integration with economic analysis, was deemed to be not so disgusting as

before. Therefore I could heartily accept such an idea: to further my education in economics.

As for my previous anxiety about future placement and career success, it also grew faint gradually. This change could be ascribed to the alteration of my life philosophy. Maybe I was influenced by some Buddhism doctrine. I learned to treat things in a wider angle, not totally persisting in a utilitarian view. And my previous idea of blueprinting the future concretely is fabulous indeed.

MicroEdu: The change of attitude is from your mentality. But what did you do physically, based on the unsuccessful lessons you learned from previous years experience?

Li: The change of mentality is critical for the success of my second round of applications, because I think few people could successfully achieve something if they do not want to do it at all. At least it's impossible for me! So a healthy mood constituted the basis for my future success.

Obviously I had some other advantages in my second round. For example, I had more adequate and accurate application information than before (This was also why I created a web for later applicants); I got big help from my friends already in the US; My G/T score became more competitive and my application credentials were all carefully designed and grew more striking than before. So I felt quite confident that this time things would change. And finally it became real.

I have told you that my advantages mainly lie in information. It was acquired mainly from my first application experience (But I hope nobody else will get info in this way!), and some from my friends in the US, and the internet. Without it, I could not now prepare to go to Seattle. UW said firmly in its bulletin that TSE was required. But in fact, an excellent girl, my classmate, got its offer without TSE last year. Her success and others let me believe: US institutions normally place more weight on an applicant's academic promise, not other aspects. A good TSE score could only predict one's promise to be a good TA, or in more direct words, a good employee. I thought the US did not lack workers, so this time I dared to send my application package to UW without TSE. But this was totally unimaginable for me last time! And this time I would have lost such an offer if I did not know this point.

But be cautious! I do not mean to say TSE is useless in an application. It obviously could enhance an applicant's chance. I just want to clarify this point: we applicants should put more time promoting our academic promise, never "she ben zhu mo" (attend to trifles to the neglect of essentials.)

MicroEdu: So may I have your opinion on your future career after graduation? Also can you tell a bit about your plan for the 4-5 years education at Washington?

Li: I could not have so clear a view on my future as on my past. Although I often thought about it and had a certain dim blueprint, I'm not sure whether it will work and am ready to make alterations at any time, after experiencing more and knowing more.

I will focus on my major during the incoming 4-5 years and must achieve a satisfactory record. Meanwhile, I will try to accumulate the necessary experience that will improve my chances in the job market. Probably, I will choose finance or international macroeconomics as my specialization, and I also want to serve in an international financial firm or organization, or teach in a university. Maybe things will not go as smoothly as I expect, since competition is hot. But at least I would not go back to China quickly. I want to know more and experience more about this powerful country, but I think finally I will choose to go back. Just a matter of time.

MicroEdu: You were talking about "utilitarian." It seems to be very common with Chinese applicants. One piece of evidence is that not a few of them are studying English only for the purpose of high scores in GRE and TOEPL. What is your opinion on these?

Li: I do not want to blame utilitarianism here because pursuing maximum self-interest is a natural human tendency and also the basis for the operation of a market economy. I think few students study English just for loving this language and almost all GRE takers feel extremely disgusted with the test itself. I think all these are reasonable. After all, we are not monks. In many cases, we have to sacrifice a lot for a certain objective or interest.

But it's better to have multiple motives when considering going abroad. Because it's a time-consuming and laboring process, I think a single utilitarian objective, such as making big bucks, satisfying one's vanity, etc, could hardly support ourselves in overcoming numerous hardships ahead. At least for me, I could not be devoted to something wholeheartedly if I really dislike it. And if so, it's vulnerable to failure.

MicroEdu: As I know, you have built a website dedicated to the applicants in liberal arts and particularly students of economics. When and how did such an idea strike you?

Li: In February this year, after finishing my application errands and just waiting for the result, I was learning to build web pages, and such an idea came to me. I just want to facilitate later economics applicants with my own experience and include important information. (In the above, I have illustrated the significance of information.) Meanwhile, I could make use of extra free time and sharpen my web skills.

MicroEdu: Through your website, one story under selecting schools caught my eye. Can you share with us here again? Did you also learn lessons on selecting schools?

Li: I suppose you refer to the story about dark University. I never expected it would reject me, as I had been admitted by many far better schools. In their declination letter, I was told the department had received 150 application packages from Mainland China that year! What I wish to say is that we can hardly decide which program will be truly hot or cold. Facing competition calmly and confidently may outweigh seeking a niche in terms of less hot.

In selecting schools, collecting as much information as possible is most important. Especially we should inquire of former applicants of your university about this. The department in a US

university might particularly favor Chinese applicants from some institutions. Normally, if a US department already has students from the same university as you, and they have done fairly well, you could apply to it.

MicroEdu: The Ci Poems you wrote, aspiring and rich in emotions, are very impressive. So your interests are not confined in economics alone. But it seems to me that economics requires the quality of rationality. While poets are sensitive, and even emotional. Do you have a somewhat mixed personality? And does your personality also influence your efforts and results?

Li: How could you call me a poet?! (smile) I tried to write several pieces just for amusement and this title make me blush!

Maybe my personality is a mixed one, not so simple. Maybe rationality and emotionality coexist in me. When I introspect myself, I find that rationality dominates in most cases. However, emotional change will have an effect on my will power. Perhaps this is the reason why I could not finally succeed in something I dislike, whatever my rationality tells me I should do. See, my personality in fact has influenced my application greatly, causing two contrary outcomes.

MicroEdu: It is from your website I learned the term "offer syndrome." After having tasted all the anxieties and excitement, would you like to make a summary of your application? Any suggestions you would give to future applicants of liberal arts or economics?

Li: What final words could I say about the application, especially for the later applicants of arts? After retrospecting my two years of tortuous application process, I feel most deeply about these two points.

First, you have to be fully conscious of whether or not you have made up your mind to go abroad. For students applying for arts subjects, especially those seeking financial aid, they are destined to sacrifice more and suffer more than ordinary students of the sciences. To get through all the trials and turmoil ahead, they have to be equipped with extraordinarily great determination, perseverance and endurance. Any hesitation in the process might incur a disaster! So carefully consider your own advantages and disadvantages in future applications, weighing what you will lose and what you might gain before you decide to make the application. But if you have committed yourself to such a venture, just hold on and never lose hope! And normally you will realize your dream with your devotion and careful preparation.

Second, please pay great attention to your application credentials and academic records. The most crucial thing for an applicant is to demonstrate his or her academic ability and promise. But students of arts normally have no papers published, or their publication could hardly be appreciated. Except TOEFL/GRE and some other tests (Americans now do not treat seriously these scores), the remaining are only your transcript and written materials. So you should fully understand their importance! Study hard and be sure to get a good academic record, and write your application materials with great care and patience.

MicroEdu: Thank you, Li! It's been very pleasant talking with you. Hope you will bring us more insights from Seattle in the near future. Best wishes on your endeavor!

Statement of Purpose

A graduate of Economics from Beijing University, with eagerness to dedicate himself to advanced economic research and ambition to participate in the blueprint of the future of China, would like to pursue a successful research career by studying in your distinguished program.

Why I Have Chosen Economics?

I was born in the West Region of China, a less developed area compared with East China. Since young, I often heard other people's discussions about the less developed economical and social conditions of the West, but nobody seemed to have an answer. In 1995, I went to a neighboring rural county. I could not forget the prosperous view of continuous glaring golden and green field spreading to the horizon, and the shabby and seamy shacks dotted in it with disharmony. I could not forget the hint of dejection and even desperation rather than invigoration on the furrowed fi{ces of these industrious farmers at such a bumper harvest. I felt great sorrow that their whole year of hard work had not improved their wretched conditions, because only less than half of their crops could be sold and most of the remaining had to rot away. It was ironical in taking consideration of the fact that China had to import millions of tons of crops every year. I began to realize gradually that the rigid social and economic systems, the segregated and less developed markets of the West, are the common background behind the phenomenon of poverty in the vast west territory. I hoped to understand the miracle of the laws behind an economy and believe that it is the key to unlock its abundant treasury. And economics is my answer to the problems.

My Undergraduate Study

On the strength of my performance in the National University Entrance Examination, the third highest out of over 200,000 examinees in Sichuan Province, I was admitted in 1996 into the School of Economics at Peking University. I was lucky to be able to study in a school with nearly half of all returned economists graduated from the US institutions. I studied with great passion and diligence to make the best of all these resources, because I was so fascinated by the forceful logic, exquisite mathematical format and social significance of economics, feeling there were so many interesting topics deserving to be explored. Besides my economics study, I endeavored to grasp as much mathematics as possible, keeping in mind that it's an indispensable tool to analyze data, construct models and formalize economic theory. In addition to the department's required one-year calculus (including introductory differential equations), half-year linear algebra, half-year statistics (stressed on practical methods) and half-year Probability and Mathematical statistics (stressed on mathematical basis), I selected Stochastic Process and Econometrics and audited some courses in the Department of Mathematics, such as Differential Equation and Dynamic Optimization. All this preparation has constituted a solid foundation for my future graduate studies.

My diligent work was wen rewarded and won me an excellent academic record, with "A" in most of my courses. My four-year cumulative GPA reached 3.75/4.0, ranked among the top 5% in my highly competitive class of 35 undergraduates and also earned me the scholarship, which is only awarded to students with superior academic performance.

Why I Choose International Economics?

If I am honored to be able to study in your eminent program, I'd like to specialize in international economics, especially new trade theory. What impresses me most about new trade theory, is its beauty in analysis of applied questions in the context of a relatively simplified model, in which microeconomics, industrial economics, and trade are miraculously forged together and depict various intriguing mechanisms behind trade. I often regard it as the paradigm of economics analysis in combination with reality. My work on my graduate thesis further deepened my understanding and evoked my strong interest in such theoretical and practical issues as intraindustry trade, multinational corporations, international technology gaps and strategic trade policy, etc. And I think, great passion and solid basis are two of the most important factors for a prospective researcher. Besides trade, I also have a keen interest in international finance, macroeconomics and industrial economics.

My Career Goal

I well understand the great pressure and challenges that will be presented to me when studying in such a distinguished program as yours. I had the opportunity to be admitted to a graduate program of China, free of a normally mandatory entrance exam, because of my past excellent academic performance. But why I would like to choose a path rampant with thickets? Because I cherish the ambition to become a first-class economist, with my learned expertise to investigate numerous complex issues in the development of China, which might attract much more attention for economics research than now, because China probably will grow into the second largest economy in the new century. It must be inspiring to observe such a large economy realizing gradual industrialization and post-industrialization in contemporary world conditions, especially when a New Economy is also rising from the horizon. It's a superior laboratory to testify and supplement the prevalent economic theory. Such work must be important to the development of both China and modern economics.

After graduation, I will choose to teach economics in West China. Famous economist Paul. A. Samuelson once said, "we in trade are the Green Beret elite troops of the profession. We lead the way and remove the landmines." I hope I could help to sweep the landmines off the Western Region's path toward an open and fully competitive economy with her unique comparative advantages, which I believe will be essential to unfold the potentially immense treasury on this land I have been loving so deeply.

Chapter 16 Junqian Xu, Washington University

Xu Junqian’s Profile

Name	Xu, Junqian
Gender	Male

Undergraduate	BS, Chemistry, Beijing University, 2000
Scores	GRE: V640, Q800, A780, TOEFL: 620; TWE: 5.5; GPA: 3.6
Publications	Yes

Universities Applied	**Major**	**Degree**	**Result**
Alberta University (Canada)	Physical Chemistry	Ph.D.	TA
Brandies University	Physical Chemistry	Ph.D.	TA
Columbia University	Physical Chemistry	Ph.D.	
Dartmouth University	Physical Chemistry	Ph.D.	
Duke University	Physical Chemistry	Ph.D.	
Emory University	Physical Chemistry	Ph.D.	TA
Johns Hopkins University	Physical Chemistry	Ph.D.	
Northwestern University	Physical Chemistry	Ph.D.	
University of Notre Dame	Physical Chemistry	Ph.D.	
Princeton University	Physical Chemistry	Ph.D.	
University of California, Irvine	Physical Chemistry	Ph.D.	
University of California, Riverside	Physical Chemistry	Ph.D.	TA
University of California, San Diego	Physical Chemistry	Ph.D.	
University of Toronto (Canada)	Physical Chemistry	Ph.D.	Admission
Tufts University	Physical Chemistry	Ph.D.	
Vanderbilt University	Physical Chemistry	Ph.D.	
Washington University	**Physical Chemistry**	**Ph.D.**	**TA**

Interview with Xu Junqian

MicroEdu: Junqian, first, a bundle of congratulations on your success in application. What is your feeling when reviewing your whole application process?

Junqian: Thank you. Like chasing my lover, I tried to fully understand her feeling and mine and then behave sincerely and confidently before enduring the pain of waiting.

MicroEdu: Interesting! Let's first know more about "your feeling." Would you please give us an evaluation of your qualifications?

Junqian: As for my application background, I deem it's not that strong, whether it is my GPA or standardized test scores. They are either average or below average. I don't want to talk too much about the numbers as it's against the tide at MicroEdu (smile). Indeed, it is not the most important thing! However, I clearly know my advantage was my cross-disciplinary study and research experience. So I used it as the theme of my application package. It's the focus of my PS. My three references support the theme and my transcripts justify its validation.

MicroEdu: With such a background, what kind of objective did you bear in mind when choosing a school? For example, did you care only about ranking, or to go to a certain school because the girl with whom you are secrecy in love is there (smile)?

Junqian: Of course, I have my bottom-line for the school rankings, just as for die face and stature of my girlfriend. But the order of ranking blurred as long as they met my minimum requirement ?the top-50 schools. Then the main focus was on the school size, private or public, class size, academic environment, living standard, climate, and convenience. So my girlfriend won't necessarily be the most beautiful girl I meet. Rather, other virtues, such as considerateness, integrity and responsibility really count.

MicroEdu: You impressed me with your MicroEdu Today article "I'm an Emory Expert." You did a solid school research on Emory University. I am wondering when you started to prepare your application, or say, prepare for choosing the lifestyle of going abroad?

Junqian: Five years ago, I made my life-changing decision to join Peking University, leaving my family and my past behind. Probably, my dream originated then. I know it's rather unusual to go out of Shanghai for a native Shanghainese. Yet, I followed my heart and embarked on an uneven way leading to my upcoming life abroad.

MicroEdu: Why do you think Beijing University is a "life-changing" place for you? Except for a solid chemistry education, what else did you reap from Beida's Wei Ming Lake?

Jlinqian: I have become maturer during the years, living independently. I know how to measure the gains and losses from the cheers and tears in love, family and friendship, and how important it

is to cherish the happy hours and endure the suffering. "Enjoy life!" that's what I mean.

MicroEdu: You have genuine passion for chemistry. I am curious -what led you into the world of Chemistry?

Jlinqian: The answer is right there in your question ?curious. Very simple. I love to discover the underlying principles of the natural world. "It's so cool to find rules that have never been discovered in this world," said Jeff, a third-year American graduate student, when introducing his research on Quantum Chemistry to me, yesterday in Blue Berry. At that point, I felt and shared the real passion in his eyes.

I guess this is why Americans are more creative than our Chinese in advanced research. Most of them study for a Ph.D. simply because they love chemistry. They are true to themselves. They are enjoying their lives. They usually take subjects such as theoretical, computational, inorganic or physical chemistry and have fun while most of the Chinese rush to organic or analytical chemistry because it's rather easy to find a decent job. I believe we have talent and we definitely can achieve more if we truly love what we do.

MicroEdu: You applied to 17 schools. How did you manage to handle so many schools?

Jlinqian: Time management and keeping track of every major shot. I believe every **MicroEdu** member can manage this or even more. So we are all well qualified for a senior consultant in big consulting firms, such as AA, KPMG or BCG, since they usually handle less than 5 clients simultaneously (smile).

MicroEdu: For most Chinese students, research experience might be the weak point. You spent a long time working in a lab after your graduation. What kind of research were you doing?

Jlinqian: Actually, I lingered in a lab for half-a-year after my graduation. I continued my research on my undergraduate thesis. And the publication is largely based on my undergraduate thesis. It's surface chemistry stuff. I'm afraid you won't be interested in that.

MicroEdu: So you have already experienced a RA's life. You have a publication. Do you think that for a science major, research and publication play very important roles in application?

Junqian: It's not necessary for undergraduates, while quite important for graduate students, in my opinion. It means infertile research if the graduate students have no publication.

MicroEdu: Why do you think such schools like Emory and Washington University are interested in you, while others such as Columbia, Northwestern and Johns Hopkins refused you?

Junqian: I also want to know the answer. But I'm sure it's not totally a matter of schools' academic rankings, since I was also refused by some 2nd or 3rd tier universities... kind of luck, sometimes...

MicroEdu: Any application tips can you share with your fellow MicroEdu members?

Junqian: My suggestion is "change your standpoint." Suppose you are the Chair of the GAC (Graduate Admission Committee). How do you feel about receiving hundreds of Taoci e-mails? What's your feeling after reading 10 pieces of Personal Statements in the morning? How do you feel about the cooked-up stories, self-important opinions, or the big words in the applicants' essays?

Actually, everything should be considered from the reverse side, not from yours. And the right answers are self-evident from such self-questioning. Most times, we are too anxious or too strong-headed and have overlooked this.

You can start by reading 5 Personal Statements in your area in 2 hours, then tell me what's your feeling. Actually I tried this before composing my own. To tell you the truth, it's so boring no matter how great, how interesting the essays are written.

MicroEdu: Most of the Chinese students go abroad with the idea that they will soon transfer to some hot fields such as computer science. It is almost a trend nowadays. Will you do that?

Junqian: "Be true to yourself!" I still remember the words by Jack Welch. I don't know whether those guys really have a passion for computer science. But my principle in handling such stuff is quite simple. If it's not comfortable, just quit! If I really hate chemistry and have a passion for other majors, quitting or transferring is quite justifiable. But, how do you feel about my swinging from my girlfriend to a millionaire, whom I don't really love?

MicroEdu: I know you were enjoying your GE internship when waiting for the offers. What made you stand out in GE's interview for an internship position in Public Relations and the Communication Department?

Junqian: Confidence, that's the key to success and happiness. I was told that's also one of the most important factors why I excel over other candidates. Maybe it's weird to hear about a PR man with a Chemistry background. So cool, aha? But the fact is not until you enter the world of business, do you come to know how much you can do beyond your major and how many people are doing the same work whatever their majors are: economics, accounting, advertising, English, engineering or science. The limitation is only in your imagination. The only criterion in the job market is, generally, the potential of learning. That's the reason why GE chose me, and vice versa.

MicroEdu: What kind of experience did GE internship endow you with?

Jinqian: GE is really a place for self-learning. In the first three days of my internship, I almost

knew nothing about PR in GE since it represents and supports 11 business units of GE. I've got to say GE is such a huuuuge monster. The interesting thing is no one came to me and told me what to do and how to do it. The only words from my boss were "Familiarize yourself with GE as much as you can and ASAP. Find out what you can do for GE. We encourage you to be proactive and creative. And your work load will be customized by your potential." That's it and that's all. You know, in McKinsey they give you 2-inch-thick instructions for your work. Oh, Jesus! that's a totally different story. GE gives you full freedom and flexibility although you may suffer the feeling of loss and helplessness at the beginning. That's also the experience of my boss and my boss' boss upon their debut in their beautiful GE offices. I appreciated such style and I did learn a lot from GE's culture: boundaryless fashion. Six Sigma quality, customer-centered vision and insistence on excellence... umm, I loved the days in GE. It was pretty cool!

MicroEdu: I hear that you are busy learning to drive every weekend. It seems you are the kind that always goes ahead of the times. I know you have started to envision yourself after 10 years. What is that? And how do you plan to develop yourself based on your current background?

Jlinqian: Great Asia general manager when I'm thirty. I don't want to be confined in the lab. Possibilities are everywhere waiting for your keen insight. As far as I know, chemistry PhDs can be IP (Intellectual Property) lawyers or consultants, analysts in consulting firms, and auditors (GE Corporate Audit Service). PhDs are not necessarily lifelong researchers. Don't be limited by our "Paradigm." I suggest www.nextwave.org to you. It's a website for the new scientists. Open your mind!

MicroEdu: Since you have started school in the US, would you please share with us your study and life at Washington University? And what are your classmates like?

Jlinqian: I got the feeling of being back in high school. Classes are small and active. I know nearly every professor in the Department and most of them know my name. The administrators and secretaries are very very nice and accessible to students, compared with their arrogant and condescending counterparts in most Chinese universities. Homework and seminars are assigned and marked every week, accompanied with lots of quizzes and exams, a bunch of orientations and receptions from Chancellor, Dean of Arts and Science, International Office and Department. You are being cared for and honored by the school, the faculty members and the staff. That's exactly what I desired for my academic development. Maybe that's only the style of a small private school, featuring the Mid-west American culture.

MicroEdu: Thank you very much, Junqian! It's really a pleasant talk!

Statement of Purpose

Four years ago I left my past behind. I had grown up in Shanghai with my mother, a single parent, and I received a high school education right down the street from my house. All of my friends and family, and everything I thought I needed, were within a couple blocks of my own front door. I never thought of leaving. I had always assumed that after high school, I would continue my education closest to my home -- at Fudan University. After all, most of the best students at my school went to Fudan. Its proximity and its reputation left little to be desired. And yet, some part of me craved change. I wanted a fresh start, a new atmosphere that could revitalize my education both in and out of the classroom. However, this was not an easy ideology to practice, for I had never known any life other than the small corner of Shanghai I shared with my mother. To leave would be an incredible opportunity, but it would also be quite painful. After long deliberation, the explorer in me prevailed, and I eventually found the setting for my future: Peking University in Beijing. Far away from my mother and my past, I would have no choice but to learn.

And so I learned. When I arrived at Peking, I knew I would excel in chemistry. But beyond that, I had trouble designing my plan of study, feeling bewildered at the various options and the many classes to choose from. But I searched for a solution and eventually I found one. One day I attended a lecture by the celebrated Nobel Prize winner, Professor Zhenning Yang, who opened my eyes to the advantages of interdisciplinary study. Professor Yang showed my fellow students and me that chemistry should not be approached as an isolated field, unrelated to the other sciences. Rather, other disciplines strengthen and invigorate chemistry.

I found Professor Yang's wisdom to be the perfect answer to my dilemma. After that morning's revelation, I took a second look at my undergraduate plan of study with the intent of putting Professor Yang's philosophy into practice. I ceased to select courses randomly or because of light workloads, as many of my friends and peers did. Instead I deliberately focused on mathematics, computer science and physics, all fundamental to building on my primary studies in chemistry.
With my passion for chemistry and renewed thanks to Professor Yang's provocative interdisciplinary theory, I indeed gained a clearer perspective of the principles of chemistry. But more importantly, I learned to direct my education forward and to shape my own future.

My professors noticed my newfound vigor and helped guide my learning even further. When they agreed to allow me to undertake my own undergraduate research project, I saw an opportunity to apply my textbook education to real scholarship for the first time. In my junior year, I entered the State Key Laboratory for Structural Chemistry of Stable and Unstable Species, participating in the spontaneous monolayer dispersion research division under the surface chemistry program.

In my research, I employed physical methods to probe the surface structure. I built mathematical models to predict the surface diffusion capacit3; and I designed graphical computer programs to simulate the diffusing progress. By the time I had finished, I knew with certainty that only my grounding in many different disciplines had led to my success. And the project was certainly a success, for I eventually showed critical evidence supporting the possible diffusing mechanism,

suggested by Professor Knozinger and Taglauer. Although the research only proved a small step toward understanding the transport mechanism, it was a big step for me. Through this work, I acquired valuable experience in ever}- step of independent research, and I learned the value of integrating many disciplines in practice. When the important periodical on surface science, Surface and Interface Analysis, accepted my thesis, I knew I had progressed a great deal since the day I left Shanghai as a confused young man with much to learn.

While I will never know whether or not I would have found the same invigorating education at Fudan, I certainly do not regret making my life-changing decision to study at Peking, for it has brought me to new horizons of learning. I realize that the atmosphere in which one learns and grows has an incredible bearing on a student's personal and professional progress, and his ability to think independently and use his tools at the frontier of knowledge. Four years ago, I knew Peking University could provide me with this atmosphere for learning. Today, I know with equal conviction that Washington Universit3' in St. Louis is the right place for me.

Both in and out of the classroom, the physical chemistry program at WUStL is an ideal environment for me to continue learning. It provides a competitive and inspiring academic atmosphere, the chance for active and fruitful research, access to state-of-the-art facilities, and close interaction between students and its distinguished faculty. Perhaps most importantly, WUStL chemists synthesize all of the sciences to make new breakthroughs in research. Professor William E. Buhro's projects on nanoscale materials, for example, combine cutting-edge research with frontier knowledge from physical, analytical, inorganic, and materials chemistry. I have found no institution that allows for such tight linking of disciplines as WUStL. I know that I can thrive in this environment, and I look forward to my WUStL enriching my scholarship and becoming my future.

Chapter 17 Margaret, University of Arizona

Margaret Wang's Profile

Name	Margaret
Gender	Female
Undergraduate	BA, English, Beijing Language and Culture University, 1999
Scores	GRE: V650, Q800, A690; TOEFL: 633; TWE: 5.0; GPA: 3.4
Employment	High School of Pudong, Shanghai

Universities Applied	**Major**	**Degree**	**Result**
Brandies University	Women's Studies	Master	
University of Michigan	Women's Studies	Master	
Brigham Young University	TESOL	Master	Half Aid
Northern Arizona University	TESOL	Master	Tuition Waiver
St. Cloud State University	TESOL	Master	TA
University of Arizona	**TESOL**	**Master**	**TA**
University of Hawaii	TESOL	Master	Tuition Waiver
University of Iowa	TESOL	Master	Admission
University of Minnesota	TESOL	Master	

Interview with Margaret Wang

MicroEdu: Months ago you were eagerly asking what the lives of Mainland Chinese students look like. Now you have been in Tucson for nearly a month. Can you share with us your initial impression of the US and the University of Arizona?

Margaret: Hmm, I haven't had a chance to meet many Chinese yet. But I do know every Chinese here is busy. And many of them are trying to study something practical, like CS or MIS. As to the country, I am impressed by the digital-oriented characteristics of the USA. You can get many things settled via Internet or phone.

Honestly, I should say I am a little disappointed with Tucson since it's a college town, compared with big cities like Los Angeles or even Shanghai and Beijing. But as time passes, I come to realize we have too much work to do in the school. Many Americans told me a lot about the city. Besides, the desert and other natural sceneries are enjoyable. It seems living here can be a lot of fun. After all, we will and should get used to that.

A point I want to initiate is that those who are going abroad to live and study should be mentally prepared. You have to be extremely independent in order to live and study here. What I found about Americans is their independency as well as their cooperation. Independent as they are, they can always work together for a project or a program.

The very first thing we need to overcome is the living. You need to learn about making calls (needs patience), managing your money, renting, transportation and many other things. You may find few people around who can really help you. It is sort of difficult. So, meanwhile, you also need to learn how to make friends and cooperate with others.

MicroEdu: Talking about making friends in the US, I suppose you refer not only to Chinese but also Americans and people from other parts of the globe, right?

Margaret: Yes, making friends is a very interesting issue for Chinese. You can meet many many new friends in an international school. And Americans party a lot. You can join if you like. For instance, as an English graduate student, our department is holding 4 parties this weekend. I'm afraid I can only join one simply because there is too much work to do.

MicroEdu: Please tell us more about your studying there.

Margaret: Speaking of studying, I guess every Chinese is quite aware of the different educational system. And I also want to warn those who are coming. The workload may be heavy for Chinese students. Like myself, I take 3 courses, as an international graduate, this is minimum, and I also need to teach. Three courses in English means a lot of reading, writing, and research. Teaching means lots of grading. I teach English Composition. So I need to review lots of papers. And I do feel the language problem we Chinese have.

MicroEdu: What is the language problem? Margaret, you are an English major. With years of rigid training, your language proficiency should be above average, I suppose.

Margaret: It's true. Compared with other Chinese, I guess I am much better regarding communication in English. But I am studying in the English Department. It's a big challenge for me if I really want to keep track of everything, and have a good GPA. But things are not that bad. American professors are humane. I do enjoy the academic atmosphere here.

So try to improve your mastery of English as much as you can and as soon as possible when you are still in China. I also find American universities weigh much on English writing. English Composition is a required course. And no matter what subjects you choose, you will have to deal with lots of paper work. And most universities hold writing workshops to encourage students to participate.

MicroEdu: And you, yourself, are teaching English Composition. It's very impressive! So who will be your students and what's your story on teaching?

Margaret: It's very ironic, actually. I teach Americans how to write. What I am thinking with this situation is that anything can happen in the USA. A teacher who doesn't speak English possibly can teach English.

Teaching is an art. I have taught two classes. I have 24 American students. They are a lot of fun, actually. And the way of teaching here is definitely different from that in China! Here classroom is student-oriented. Participation of students is highly recommended. As a teacher, I should organize and initiate questions. Guide them. That's it.

Fortunately, these kids are obedient. They like fun, and they have great expectations of college life. (They are freshmen.) I guess part of the fun for me is the cultural identity they can find from me or my way of behaving or whatever.

Chinese are known to be reserved and silent, which is regarded as politeness. Here in the USA, you have to speak up; otherwise, you won't succeed. I am still learning how to speak my mind more and build confidence in myself. Independent thinking is very important. It might be essential to survive in the US.

MicroEdu: You mentioned several times being independent and think independently. As I know, you have been an English teacher for one year before coming to the US. Do you think you are independent enough to handle life and study in the US?

Margaret: This is a very good question. I always think human beings have potential. You may never know what you can do or in what way you can handle it best unless you give it a good try.

MicroEdu: So you wonder about your potential and wish to fully explore it!

Margaret: I guess this is something I live up to. And I also realize going abroad is a way to broaden your view of life. You might not live better here in the USA than in China. Like at the very beginning, I was really depressed by the food here. And I miss China and things over there A LOT!!!!

MicroEdu: You wrote "life is built on confidence, though unpredictable" to encourage other English major applicants. Does your confidence come from the same belief that you can further tap your potential?

Margaret: I believe life is unpredictable! But we need a hope in life, from which your strength comes. Confidence comes from your belief. And you have to hold to that. And life could be very different if you look at it from another perspective.

I am very much impressed by Jinbo's article - Putting Things into Perspectives. As long as you take a right approach toward things, like going abroad, marriage, or whatever, you will enjoy life. Sometimes, I have a very strange feeling towards Chinese here. I can see many of them live under pressure. I mean we don't have to live that way.

MicroEdu: Where does the pressure come from? Do you mean life is actually beautiful so long as one holds a proper attitude?

Margaret: You get it. That's what I mean of pressure I find in some Chinese here. We must have positive attitudes toward life. Smile!

MicroEdu: Why are some English majors, especially those freshly graduated, so confused about what major to apply. And I know you have also tried sociology programs. Any opinion or suggestions you can offer on these?

Margaret: Another good question! I guess this is the main difficulty. And working experience counts a lot!!! English majors without any working experience have less chance, and they could be very confused by what they are going to study!! Definitely!

When I look back at what I have learned in college, I guess I wasted too much rime. In some sense, we are in a pit. But opportunities are always there. What we need to do is try to adjust ourselves and scoop them up. Some English majors go abroad immediately after graduation. I would say they have gone far ahead in this or that way. Everything takes time.

MicroEdu: So what can they prepare in China, in your opinion?

Margaret: Besides English language itself, as I said earlier, learning the American way of thinking and taking action is also important.

But something I always stick to is our cultural identity. As a Chinese, something deeply rooted in

our blood can't be changed. But we can change our way of living. And we can learn how to be an international citizen.

Just don't merely care about GRE or TOEFL scores. Care more about other aspects. American teachers don't care too much about scores. They very much like creative thinking. So in your application package, you can be as crazy as possible. Don't misunderstand crazy. Stay true!

For Chinese, crazy means staying out of your conservative thinking and behaving. I am also learning in this sense. And it's always hard getting out of control. But if you get that done, you make it.

MicroEdu: Creativity may be something ignored by Chinese educators (smile). But you may find quite a few articles at MicroEdu Today talking about thinking differently. Do you think English majors are at a disadvantage in application?

Margaret: Application is another matter of matching. Schools choose those they think are good. I guess professors have their instinct (which is on the basis of experiences), or say they can discern who can accomplish the target. And they wish to choose the one they can trust. I don't think they have certain standards.

I know a blind guy from the Middle East who is in a Ph.D. program in the English Department. He is offered the same position as a TA. And to tell you the truth, he speaks fluent English, but his pronunciation is awful, I couldn't understand him at the beginning when we were trained together. Can you imagine Americans letting a blind foreigner teach Americans how to teach? I guess in his application, something special in him hit the spot, right? It can be the quality of being a human being.

MicroEdu: This might be a very good example that China and US differ in values and philosophy, particularly in the education system. To succeed in the application, we need to learn, think and do in the western way. What suggestions will you give to the other English majors?

Margaret: I am always thinking everyone deserves to go after his or her dream. Nothing should actually impede your dream simply because you are an English major. Meanwhile, set a realistic goal. Try to look into your own background and your potential in the program you are applying for. So your application packages might need to cover these two aspects. Do more research on your target programs and schools. When choosing schools, besides ranking, Americans normally take location and living expenses into consideration. This year, I found several English majors came here with a tuition waiver or half financial aid. Going abroad is not the destination. We should always look for something beyond that. So be mentally prepared for what kind of life you are going to lead in the USA. Then you will enjoy.

MicroEdu: Thank you, Margaret! I enjoyed talking with you a lot. I expect other readers will appreciate the positive life attitude that you have.

Statement of Purpose

A defining moment in my life occurred in September 1995 when having excelled in the National Entrance Examination, I was admitted to English Department of Beijing Language and Culture University, which is famous for its language teaching and international community. I left my lovely little hometown and went to Beijing to conduct my undergraduate study. I left my parents and my friends in order to experience a new life and broaden the scope of my education and view of life. Whenever I try to think or write about my life, I always settle upon the importance of this move, which actually formed my destiny in my pursuit of English enrichment and the use of my knowledge to help those in need of a helping hand.

Language learning takes time and patience. But I have strong passion and persistence for it, as indicated by my good college course performance. In my second year, I participated in a language exchange program, in which Chinese students exchanged language-learning experience with foreign students studying Chinese in my school. This kindled my interest in teaching language.
Through this program, I developed better oral and written English communication skills. By learning from native speakers, I was finding a better way to study a foreign language and to communicate across cultures. I particularly enjoy writing research papers because this gives me a sense of accomplishment. When the time came to work on my graduation thesis, I focused on one aspect of a novel "To the Lighthouse" by one of my favorite writers, Virginia Woolf. My paper was among the top 5 out of 98 papers and earned highest honors.

After receiving my BA, I continued to follow my interest in learning and teaching and August 1999 was another exciting moment in my life. I left Beijing for another big city, Shanghai, to embark on teaching English in the high school of PuDong, Shanghai. For me, teaching in classrooms is so fascinating, though it's not easy. Basically; two aspects are extremely important in teaching teenagers; one is discipline, while the other is initiating their interests and motivation in language study. I put a lot of effort into this and this effort has paid off. For example, I invited my English friends to come to my classes so that my students could use English to communicate with my native English friends. Consequently, the students showed great enthusiasm and initiative in learning the English language.

Starting from October of 1999, as a volunteer, I have taught Intensive ESI. in SCMC (Shanghai's Children's Medical Center). This is a new challenge for me, since my students are doctors who need English to help while living and studying in the USA in the future. Dealing with these people who actually have a foundation in English means that I need lots of preparation in teaching methods, language analysis, vocabulary and materials study before every class. This is more demanding and it involves more theoretical study and research. I am really happy with this, mainly because it develops my own potential to teach the English language and this is why I have decided to build my career in this direction.

Thanks to my good performance in class, I ranked in the top 2 among 50 candidates who desired to have a teaching position in the Language Training Center here in Shanghai. On November 15th,

I obtained a post in this center, teaching CET4 (College English Test Band 4) and CET6 (College English Test Band 6) courses. All of my students come from different stations in life and all want to improve their mastery of English. They are highly motivated and they Want to know everything at the beginning. However this is not the way to learn a language. On one hand, I know from my own experience what it is like to learn a language in a classroom at a level higher than the primary level and therefore, I understand what they are going through in learning English at an advanced level. So intentionally I share my own experiences in class and help them find better solutions to their own problems.

On the other hand, teaching on a high level also helps me. In order to explain materials well, I need to have a broad background in the liberal arts and sciences. Often, I come to questions such as "What's the key for adults to learn English?", "In what specific ways are adults different from children in learning English?", "To what extent should I use native language in support of second language teaching?", "How can I find an efficient way to teach students in a non-English-speaking country?"...I have studied and researched into the areas of methodology of second language acquisition myself. But I strongly feel these are not sufficient. I crave for systematical training in this field with the aim of developing a more complete understanding of the issues on ESL teaching. By looking through the MA of English Language/Linguistics at the University of Arizona, I have found this program a perfect fit for me. I believe your program will meet my needs and help me build my future career with a firm foundation.

In addition to all of the above, learning and teaching are two of the most important things in my life. I realize that teaching is the best way of learning and to teach and publish research are my long-term goals and dreams. Actually, all the members of my family are teachers and although teachers are not highly paid in China, I still have chosen to teach following my graduation. Now I have tasted the satisfaction this brings. As one of my American teachers said to me, "Teaching is a very intense and stressful occupation and requires patience and care. Nevertheless the benefits are great, especially when you see students become successful and realize that you had a part in that."

I have never lost my own educational path and I have become aware that my personal education is not complete yet. I am truly looking forward to the opportunity of studying with you, being able to see more cultural perspectives and hopefully add my own experience to the rich diversity of your university.

Chapter 18 Jiji Zhang, Carnegie Mellon University

Jiji Zhang's Profile

Name	Zhang, Jiji
Gender	Male
Undergraduate	Philosophy, Peking University 2000
Scores	GRE: V680, Q800, A770; TOEFL 633; TWE: 5.0; GPA: 3.79
Publications	NO

Universities Applied	**Major**	**Degree**	**Result**
Carnegie Mellon University	**Logic and Philosophy**	**Ph.D.**	**Fellowship**
Columbia University	Logic and Philosophy	Ph.D.	Fellowship
Cornell University	Logic and Philosophy	Ph.D.	Admission
Princeton University	Logic and Philosophy	Ph.D.	
Rice University	Logic and Philosophy	Ph.D.	
University of California, Los Angles	Logic and Philosophy	Ph.D.	
University of Illinois, Chicago	Logic and Philosophy	Ph.D.	Full Aid
University of Illinois, Urbana Champaign	Logic and Philosophy	Ph.D.	
University of Kansa	Logic and Philosophy	Ph.D.	Full Aid
University of Michigan	Logic and Philosophy	Ph.D.	
University of Pennsylvania	Logic and Philosophy	Ph.D.	Waiting
University of Pittsburgh	Logic and Philosophy	Ph.D.	
University of Wisconsin, Madison	Logic and Philosophy	Ph.D.	Fellowship+TA

Interview with Jiji Zhang

MicroEdu: Jiji, welcome back from Carnegie Mellon University for the summer break. I am very curious and even a bit scared facing a philosopher. In my eyes, philosophy is an all-inclusive, but also theoretical field. Am I right in this point? Why did you choose philosophy when you decided to study abroad one year ago?

Jiji: Thank you. I studied mathematical logic in the Philosophy Department of Peking University for four years, and graduated last year before I went to CMU. As an extremely lazy guy, no wonder I applied to philosophy departments in the United States, which saved me a lot of work.

Now the question is why I have chosen to study philosophy in college. Well, when I was in high school, I got the admission from the Philosophy Department of PKU, exempted from the National Examination, though I was actually a science student at that time. You know I was as lazy five years ago as I am now, so I accepted the admission without much consideration. I didn't know anything about philosophy or logic when I made the decision, except that the major was extremely unprofitable. But why bother to take the damn exams!

So it really doesn't make sense to discuss whether I come to philosophy because I love it. But, now I am quite sure about my attitude towards philosophical stuff. Maybe I don't love it, but definitely I don't hate it. I appreciate some kinds of philosophy very much, just as I appreciate some kinds of art. At the same time, however, I know I can never ever be a philosopher myself. I would rather die than be one.

Now I am in the Philosophy Department at CMU. The reason why I chose to go there is quite obvious. I can't be a philosopher, so I go to a place where I don't study philosophy. By the way, I study some stuff closely related to statistics currently.

MicroEdu: What qualities and image did you highlight in your application package? A potential star philosopher in the future?

Jiji: I didn't think of it at that time. In retrospect, I feel I mainly focused on my broad interest and broad background. For example, one of my recommendation letters talked about my mathematical ability and another talked about my background in linguistics. On the other hand, I managed to convey the image of a reflecting person who has some insight on his major.

MicroEdu: I know you have spent a rather long time on your writing sample. Many arts applicants are hesitating whether to submit a writing sample or not for they lack confidence in both the ideas and language of their writing sample. Would you please share with us how you made your writing sample shine?

Jljl: Personally I regard the writing sample as the most important part in the package, if there is one. It is really grueling for an undergraduate. I stole the idea from my advisor in PKU, and

polished the general writing with more than ten persons. My case is not that typical, so I can't provide any suggestions in detail. All in all, if you don't think the writing sample is above average, don't put it in the package unless it is required.

MicroEdu: What is your essay strategy?

Jiji: In my personal statement, if this is your concern, I emphasized my academic opinions and academic plans.

MicroEdu: Did you feel it was a bit of a pity to decline the offer from Columbia University since it is such an internationally reputable school?

Jiji: As I have noted above, I can't be a philosopher, so I should not go to superb philosophy departments. Actually the Philosophy Department in the University of Pittsburgh is a top 3 (maybe the very top). Columbia and Upenn also have exceptional philosophers. But I chose CMU, because here at CMU I could do other crazy things than classical philosophy.

As a philosophy department, CMU's program is not that good. A scenario is that a logician in the US once helped me rank the offers I received. He placed CMU at the bottom. Nonetheless, I'm going to CMU. Who knows! It is a pleasure to ignore authority, isn't it?

MicroEdu: Would you please share with us your future plans? Have you ever been haunted by the idea of transferring to certain hot majors like computer science?

Jiji: I don't have a clear picture of my future at present, partly because I haven't got a clear image of myself yet. What can I do? What kind of job will interest me? I don't know. As a Ph.D. student in a philosophy department, of course I would be expected to be a scholar. But I am really not sure whether I am the right person for academic research. What do you think, after a quick contact with me?

Anyhow, I did once think of transferring to computer science, even when I was in PKU and I had the chance. But as I have said several times, I am an extremely lazy person. And more importantly, I haven't recognized my true ability. This, I believe, is common among Chinese students.

MicroEdu: Now you are enjoying yourself playing MaJiang in your hometown. Can you often play Ma Jiang in the USA as a Chinese way of celebrating life? How is your life in the US?

Jiji: Hey, Haichan, forget about MaJiang, okay? As for the life in the US, I don't think most Chinese will really ENJOY it. Sorry if I am too bold. How can we? Poor food! Poor friendship! I don't know. Maybe I am still at a loss. However, the point of going abroad is not just enjoying life, in my opinion. The experience is undoubtedly important.

MicroEdu: Are you still in your cultural shock period? After the excitement, freshness,

curiosity of the early days in the USA, what do you feel now?

Jiji: Not much cultural shock, really. If there is shock, it is about language, about payment, about study, about time. I feel better than the early days now. I can't think of other words.

MicroEdu: Jiji, you have a very interesting viewpoint of life. I observe the whole world in an aesthetic way. How romantic and poetic! Then how do you plan to embrace a new lifestyle or even new value system in the USA with your life attitude?

Jiji: I am not cynical, and I am not pessimistic. I am easy going and open-minded. I love multi-dimension more than anything else. Therefore, I will try to adapt to the lifestyle and appreciate the value system here in the US, though I definitely don't like it very much at present. As to how, forgive my laziness, I haven't thought of it yet.

MicroEdu: Thank you, Jiji. Nice talking with you!

Statement of Purpose

In order to make me more familiar to you, I'd like to talk about my educational background, academic interests and future plans.

In 1996, waived of the National Examination for Entrance to Universities, I entered Peking University, the best university in our country. Here, I met a few leading Chinese logicians and philosophers. Under their guidance, I made the first step of my academic expedition. In the past three years, like most students in the department, I finished all the required courses of philosophy, which gave me access to many philosophical schools and movements.

What distinguishes me, however, is my competence in logic and mathematics. Majoring in logic, I breezed through the undergraduate courses with exceptional grades. I also took some graduate courses in Modal Theory, Proof Theory and Recursive Theory. Thanks to the affinity between mathematics and logic, I did not find much difficulty in many mathematical courses either, such as analysis (mathematical and real), algebra (lineal and abstract), topology, and some discrete mathematics. In those classes, I always ranked the first or second out of about 160 students, most of whom are from the Department of Mathematics and the Department of Computer Science. The study not only equipped me with a strong background, but also added to my interest and confidence in mathematics and logic.

Naturally, when handling philosophical issues, I prefer the analytic method. This does not mean I reject other approaches to philosophy. Every time I read the works of some non-analytic thinkers, especially Nietzsche, Kierkegaard and Sartre, I was deeply touched by the wisdom and power displayed in their thoughts and arguments. However, when it is up to me to deal with some problems, I cannot help resorting to logical analysis, which I regard as the most reliable approach. Soundness, in my opinion, is not only crucial to mathematics and logic, but also important to philosophy. For this reason, I admire Frege and Carnap very much.

Unfortunately, as I study Chinese philosophy, I can hardly find the analytic methodology. The synthetic method of Chinese philosophy does have some advantages in metaphysics, but many or most Chinese philosophers have gone so far in this direction that they seldom adopt the methodology of logical analysis. Such a situation gives me the feeling that we may expect a revolutionary breakthrough in Chinese philosophy if we import the analytic spirit of the West. That's one important reason why I want to get more advanced training in logic and analytic philosophy in the United States.

To prepare for further study, I paid much attention to analytic philosophy and philosophy of language. The movement of analytic philosophy has gone a long way in this century. One analytic philosopher may differ, to a considerable extent, from another in specific objects and ways of research. However, the common and central task of these thinkers to clarify the meaning of language, in my opinion, does not change much. When analyzing language, either the language of science or the ordinary language, the methodologies of logic, both semantic and syntactic, play an

important role. Furthermore, in linguistics and philosophy of language, the research of Formal Semantics is also closely related to logic. Thus my strong background in logic and mathematics can help very much. Meanwhile such reliance on these fields of logic extends my scope to the philosophy of logic. What is logic? Where lies the foundation and boundary of logic? These issues, I think, are also essential in the study of the foundations of mathematics. Besides, Philosophical logic is appealing to me. In my view, it can be a very important approach to metaphysics and epistemology.

In addition to those theoretical aspects, I am quite interested in the applied aspects of logic. I audited some courses in the department of Computer Science at PKU and in October 1998, I became an assistant of a project on Artificial Intelligence (AI), which is implemented jointly by our department and the department of Computer Science at USTC (University of Science and Technology of China). The main concern is with Intentional Logic and Cognitive Logic. I learned a lot by participating in it and got to know the importance of non-standard logics, such as non-monotonic logics and dynamic logics. I feel that the application of logic in this area is not simply based on logical theories and methodologies, but at the same time, conducive to the development of theories. Also curious about Cognitive Science and Decision Theory, I read some works on Game Theory last year and have thought about the problem of Multi-subject Cognition and Decision for some time.

In summary, currently my interests lie in the following areas:

(1) Analytic Philosophy, Philosophy of Logic and Philosophical Logic
(2) Philosophy of Language and Formal Semantics in Linguistics
(3) Foundations of Mathematics and Logic
(4) AI and Cognitive Science.

In light of my academic background, I believe I am qualified to work in one of these fields. But I also realize that what I have learned is still far from enough to conduct research in depth on these topics. I feel compelled to get additional access to advanced theories in these areas and receive specialized and profound training under a scholar, whose work can serve as a model for me.

Consequently, I find your institution the right place for me. I am happy to see that the structure of he program of philosophy at Carnegie Mellon University, which provides both width and flexibility, accords well with what I have in mind. The rich tradition in interdisciplinary research at your institution also suits me very well. My ultimate goal is to obtain a scholastic post in the academic study of philosophy and logic. If I am fortunate enough to be enrolled in your program, I will hopefully start my career from a high level.

I hope my application will have your serious consideration. Thank you.

Chapter 19 ViVi, Yale University

Vivi's Profile

Name	Vivi
Gender	Female
Undergraduate	BA, Chinese Language and Literature, Zhongshan University, 2000
Scores	GRE: V590, Q800, A760; TOEFL: 657; GPA: 3.7
Publications	NO

Universities Applied	**Major**	**Degree**	**Result**
Columbia University		Ph.D.	
Indiana University, Bloomington		Ph.D.	TA
Harvard University		Ph.D.	
Ohio State University		Ph.D.	TA
University of California, Berkeley		Ph.D.	
University of California, Los Angeles		Ph.D.	
University of Illinois, Urbana- Champaign		Ph.D.	TA
University of Michigan		Ph.D.	
University of Southern California		Ph.D.	
University of Washington		Ph.D.	
University of Wisconsin, Madison		Ph.D.	TA
Yale University	**East Asia Language & Literature**	**Ph.D.**	**Fellowship**

Interview with Vivi

MicroEdu: Congratulations, Vivi! An offer from Yale University is surely an honor that proves your excellence. But still I am a little surprised that you are going to study East Asian Language and Literature in the US. Why? I suppose the visa officer asked the same question?

Vivi: Yes, actually she asked twice. It may seem to be strange that I study East Asian in USA. But the reason is very simple. What I am going to learn at Yale will not be available in any university in China.

My undergraduate major is Chinese Language and Literature, and my future studies will continue to be concentrated on this. The difference is that I wish to take an interdisciplinary and cross-cultural approach to conduct my study, which means my research will cover not only China, but also other Asian countries, even countries in the rest of the world.

Yale offers me such opportunities. Take research language for example, I will learn Japanese and French as a must for my dissertation. If needed, I can even go to some East Asian countries, say, Japan or Korea, to pursue my study or simply learn the languages. We do have comparative studies in China, but the research conditions in USA are far better.

MicroEdu: Have you had a clear research plan for your future study in Yale?

Vivi: Not very clear yet. I am interested in comparative studies and gender studies. I will decide on this in the second or third year at Yale.

MicroEdu: What is your current plan after winning a doctorial degree?

Vivi: My ultimate plan is to make innovation for the five-thousand-year-old civilization of China. Am I boastful? To be realistic, I may work in a university either in China or the US, or a research center of the government. I will also train my writing skills so that someday I may become a writer.

MicroEdu: I am interested in your ambitious goal. What kind of innovation will that be?

Vivi: I want to put Chinese culture in a broader background and interpret it in a new way. You know Chinese civilization is really amazing. But the world doesn't know about it, even few Chinese people are truly interested in it. Why? One of the reasons is that "culture" is always described as abstruse and complicated. I don't like this. I believe its beauty and wisdom can be understood by all human beings. To achieve my grand dream, I see the education at Yale a good beginning.

MicroEdu: When did you develop such ambition as to make Chinese culture widely

appreciated?

Viv: This idea was developed gradually. I have loved Chinese culture since very young. I always like classical music, calligraphy, and painting, among others. But it's not until I entered my university that I decided to major in it. In the first two years of my undergraduate study, I only focused on classical Chinese literature, but later I found the traditional training is not enough for me, so I began to pay attention to other cultures. While I came to appreciate these cultures, I became more proud that I was nurtured by the Chinese civilization. I wish to let more people understand this.

MicroEdu: Vivi, share with us some of your application stories and experience, please!

Vivi: Let me start from selecting schools. I have to say choosing which schools to apply is a very delicate and tiring procedure. I spent about 2 months to do the job. First, check the ranking, then go to the university's website and see professors' research interests, their publications, if possible. The job is consuming. But it paid off later.

MicroEdu: What followed the two months efforts?

Vivi: Finally I decided 12 schools that matched my research interest. I wrote a brief email to the professor of the school I was interested in to ask for his/her advice. Not all the professors gave me detailed instruction, but some of them did imply whether it would be possible for me to be admitted. For example, when I wrote to Princeton University, the professor advised me to pursue a master degree first. Then I knew that at present I could not apply for it.

I also sensed that research interest is very important in the decision of admissions and offers. You may be excellent, but this doesn't mean that you can do well in a certain field. Professors may prefer those have similar experience and a clear future plan.

MicroEdu: How did you write an appealing personal statement with a clear future plan?

Vivi: PS must be very detailed and well planned. I began to design my PS in August last year. I wrote down every piece of inspiration from everyday life. Good ideas come from accumulation rather than overnight thinking. In October my notes consisted of 30 pages. By then I had a general idea of what to write and on what to focus. I also read reference books on how to write PS in those days.

MicroEdu: What is the outcome of all the schools to which you applied?

Vivi: Six admitted me. I got Yale's offer in February when other applications for financial aid were still being processed. But four of those schools were considering me for a Teaching Assistant position, the others a fellowship.

For students majoring in liberal arts, we hardly have any chance to work as a Research Assistant.

Except for the rare cases of the top 10 schools, the competition for university fellowship is extremely fierce because all the incoming students are potential competitors. The school may recruit one or two TA's from new students.

MicroEdu: At last you savored the fruit of your previous efforts. Vivi, I should say what you have done is very close to what MicroEdu encourages her members to do. Did you learn this from MicroEdu?

Vivi: **MicroEdu** spirit is very provoking and refreshing. I am not sure how much I learned from **MicroEdu**. But undoubtedly it gave me inspirations and helped me be more confident about my own decision. I am happy that **MicroEdu** and I share the same ideas.

MicroEdu: Vivi, looking back at the whole process, what do you want to say now? Can you give advice to other applicants of liberal arts?

Vivi: Well, what I want to say could be more than 30 pages. Actually, I am writing a Chinese summary about my application now. The greatest gain is that I finally find something that interests me. To the future applicants, they may also have trouble deciding what to learn. My advice is to follow your instinct. Once your mind is set, follow through and do it.

MicroEdu: Thank you, Vivi! It's a pleasure to talk with an ambitious and intelligent young woman who wishes to make Chinese literature and culture widely loved and appreciated. Best wishes for your dream!

Personal Statement

Why choose Yale? Are you just indulged in the fame or really aware of its uniqueness for you? These are good questions asked not only by my friends but also by myself. To me, graduate studies should be both intellectually exhilarating and challenging. But to decide which school to attend is never an easy job. Keeping this in mind, I analyzed carefully all the prospective schools, programs as well as my strength and desires. Finally I found diverse answers to the questions above: First, the opportunities for teaching languages and literature, an important part of your doctoral program, provide me with ready access to language pedagogy, theory and practice crucial for a teacher to-be like me. Moreover, the artistic tradition on the campus, as well as the wide range of social and athletic activities would make the graduate studies more interesting and rewarding. Further, the interaction with your excellent students from different cultural, economic, and educational backgrounds, which is far beyond the confinement of classroom learning, would greatly enrich my personal experience and deepen my understanding of the world. But what captured my interest most of all is the manner in which the distinctive studies in Yale would fit into my academic and research plan. Instead of being simply a random follower of reputation, I am now proud of knowing exactly what I need and what I want to achieve.

I am especially interested in Six Dynasties and Tang Poetry, Song Lyrics, and Women's literature. To pursue my interest, I concentrated mainly on the literature, philosophy history and major literati of those time periods in both my coursework and independent studies. I also took care to train myself in fundamentals such as ancient Chinese language, culture criticism and literary theory.

For my Academic Year Thesis, I specialized in the Song Lyrics of Li Qingzhao, a distinguished poetess of pre-modern China famous for her doleful boudoir lyrics. Inspired by the intellectual history and women studies overall and their special embodiment in Song Dynasty, I began to doubt the long term view of traditional Sinologists that tended to relegate Chinese women's image to a narrow stereotype; one who staved lovesick or crooned the melancholy of Eros lost, lonely longings and anything within the accustomed boudoir precincts. After careful discussion with my academic advisors, I solicited reference from the Department and asked for admission into the Special Collection Room of the University where the manuscripts, original editions and records of ancient literature are housed. To get first-hand information of Li and her remote dynasty, I spent long hours in the storeroom every day. Still vivid in my memory is the winter of that year, the coldest season ever for me. The poor heating facilities of the building often broke down, but I needed to stay bare handed to ensure that I was tender and flexible enough to deal with those dilapidated pages, which were embrittled and worn out by constant usage and the passing of time. So every half an hour I had to stop and put my' iced hands on the radiator in the lobby; and when they were warm enough, I would go back to the books again. The whole process seemed to be anything but glamorous, but 1 felt that was the work I loved, even on the frequent occasions when it was seemingly tedious and frustrating. Later all this proved to be worthwhile. From the reference material, I successfully discovered many unheeded facts, which became the substantial foundation of my thesis illustrating a fresh idea that, contrary to common knowledge, Li was

brave, ambitious, and self-achieved. This thought turned out to be a challenge to the old critical opinion that has prevailed for centuries, and it was so sharp and intriguing that several times when I discussed this with professors holding different views, it would trigger an argument. Such experience greatly added to the weight and insights of my research. When handed in at the end of the term, the thesis was highly recommended by the Academic Committee of my Department and selected as the Very Best Paper of the academic year. I was proud of my fresh idea in this almost fixed academic subject as well as the accolades that I earned from my professors, but most importantly, I have learned not to be daunted by the authority, but to ask sophisticated questions and think independently and critically. This also convinced me that I am capable for academic research, with the necessary enthusiasm, curiosity, energy, and temperament.

In my graduate studies toward a doctoral degree, I wish to examine more closely the relationship between women's status and literature in traditional China (Song and other late imperial dynasties), as well as poetry and poetics in Six Dynasties, Tang and Song Dynasty, with special concentration. I also wish to take an interdisciplinary and cross-cultural approach to pursue my studies, an approach that has been applied successfully by only a few scholars in China. My experiences have convinced me that if I want to be a contributive scholar in this field, I should not only embed myself deeply in my native culture, but also draw inspirations from other disciplines, cultures and their people. I am glad to know your program encourages interdisciplinary studies in history, history of art, comparative literature and social science, which make the program more challenging, connected, and intellectually stimulating than other similar ones. In your esteemed research atmosphere that calls for mutual respect and inspiration, I believe I can bring my intellectual capabilities into full play, and in return add luster to your illustrious program.

In my personal life, I found great pleasure in writing since high school, when I published my first Chinese classical poem in a local newspaper. Along the years I keep writing poems and essays with themes varied from everyday experience to social issues to cultural criticism. By taking part in this creative process I have experimented with tools used by other authors in the past and have thrived on being productive. I also enjoy appreciating Chinese traditional calligraphy and landscape painting and practice them myself from time to time. All this allows me to maintain a keen mind in a wide range of Chinese cultures and endow me with inspiration now and then.

In terms of my future occupation, I see myself as a scholar, writer and teacher at college level. In doing this, I will combine my Chinese perspective and research methods with those of the West, making innovation for the old civilization that has existed for thousands of years and has been studied for almost the same time frame. With the friendship I establish with both your students and faculty, I will be able to prompt academic interactions by inviting leading scholars to visit China, enhancing the cultural exchanges between China and the United States. I also aim to develop my talent for teaching and writing, and let my character lead me. I know I can work toward these goals in an ideal academic environment like yours, with fewer distractions and more commitment.

I realize that admission into your school is highly competitive, but I know that I am highly qualified, eager and prepared to meet all of the challenges that will undoubtedly be presented.
Please open your doors to me so I can open the doors of discovery to the world.

Reference Letter #1

Dear Sir or Madam:
I take great pleasure in recommending Vivi, one of my favorite students, for admission into your distinguished graduate program.

I first became acquainted with Ms. Vivi in 1997, when she took the course History of Chinese Drama that I taught. I got to know her better when I advised her research in the last two years of her undergraduate studies.

An extraordinary talented student, Ms. Vivi excelled most of her fellow students in both coursework and her research papers. In my course of History of Chinese Drama, she often asked the most imaginative and creative questions about the lecture and the assigned readings, which was really a pleasant surprise for me since Chinese students tend to be shy and conservative in class, quite a contrast to her boldness. Her Academic Year Thesis entailed in-depth research on personality, life history and literary criticism of Li Qingzhao, an excellent pre-modern Chinese poetess. An active thinker, she is not satisfied with the traditional image of Li, which is characterized by her boudoir lament lyrics, and decided to reveal other important aspects of this famous poetess and give her a fair evaluation. This is a very refreshing idea, but not an easy task for an undergraduate student since it is opposite to the long-held view.

Taking advantage of her solid background in classical literature and ancient writing, Ms. Vivi read extensively and critically all the historical records available. With her strong English proficiency, she even read reference material written by Sinologists from America and Japan, which is very rare even for students on the graduate level. I clearly remember how this industrious woman haunted different libraries in our university, and some of which only allow teachers or graduate students to get in, but Ms. Vivi persuaded the librarians with her courage and persistence. After careful consideration, Ms. Vivi often came to my office and discussed with me her new findings and problems met during the course, from which she exhibited exquisite analytical and expressive skills. She never lost herself in the tremendous amount of reference materials; instead, she is well versed in spotting and organizing relevant ideas and then later combining them with her own. At the end of the term she successfully presented a paper that the department's Academic committee considered as the very best paper of the year. With its meticulous research and original thinking, the paper has served as an example of the consummate academic writing for other students of mine ever since.

Viewing me as both a friend and teacher of hers, Ms. Vivi often talked with me about her ideal to become an innovative researcher on Chinese language and literature. To help her quench her thirst for genuine understanding of Chinese culture, I tutored her in her self-study program and have lent many of my own books to her, some of which are outside her major, though related, such as books on history, philosophy, journalism, etc. And she seemed to be fascinated by all of them. Judging by her past attainment, I believe she has been much more engrossed in doing independent research than most of the other students I have taught. Honestly, I have not seen many Chinese students

who are so intent on achieving an academic career in this field. This has won her appreciation from not just me but my colleagues as well.

Now, mature as both a professional and as an individual, Ms. Vivi is aiming at a more advanced training to bring her intellectual capabilities into full play, which she hopes to receive in your famous university. I understand this young woman's aspiration and believe that her unusual talents will stand her in good stead for a quality graduate study like yours. I shall really appreciate it if you could accept her into your program, thus putting her on track to realize her dreams.

Yours Sincerely

Professor
(name)

Reference Letter #2

Dear Sir or Madam,
At Miss Vivi's request, I am writing to support her application for acceptance into your graduate program.

Miss Vivi worked as an intern in my Department of Politics, Culture and Science at (newspaper name) Daily in the two summer sessions of 1998 and 1999. As one of the biggest and most distinguished newspaper bloc of the country, (name) Newspaper Group endows great pressure and burden on each journalist. Every year we need some young blood who are responsible, and good at writing and communication to help us. Ms. Vivi easily met our requirements and worked with us for four months under the direction of my colleagues and myself.

The main responsibilities she shouldered were interviewing and composing. This work was both challenging and burdensome for a novice, even though Miss Vivi had taken related classes in school. The major problem she encountered at the very start was the complicated format and regulation of reportage, but soon she demonstrated her impressive ability as a fast-learner, characterized by asking right questions in unfamiliar fields and by memorizing necessary relevant information in a short period of time. During the lunch hour we often saw her studying international periodicals about Journalism and Sinology. Having been a Chinese major, I was fond of discussing with her a variety of topics varied from current affairs to cultural events, from which I saw more clearly her keen mind and energy. Her substantial training in writing also helped her. After half a month of practice, she began to work independently and soon gave out new reports that were unfeigned, attractive, and succinct, the very traits of successful news release. During her internship, several of her works were published on the Front Page, which was a rare honor and recognition of fulfillment for our young people.

What contributing to Miss Vivi's achievement as well were her interpersonal skills. Courteous, pleasant and helpful, she can always win trust from people who know very little about her. While she worked with us, her colleagues, myself included, all had confidence in her as a good team player. Among her many valuable talents I'd also like to mention her immense proficiency in English and computer, which is something she can put to good use in any academic positions. A versatile associate, with whom I have enjoyed working, she should be able to help enrich the class discussions in your program with her enthusiasm and professional experience.

For the above reasons, I recommend her to you without any reservation. I believe that she will become an excellent student and assistant when admitted you're your program. Your favorable consideration of her application will be highly appreciated.

Sincerely,
Professor
(name)

Chapter 20 Qihua Xiong, Pennsylvania State University

Qihua Xiong's Profile

Name	Xiong, Qihua
Gender	Male
Graduate	MS, Shanghai Institute of Nuclear Research, CAS, 2000
Undergraduate	BS, Physics, Wuhan University, 1997
Scores	GRE: V610 Q770, A640; TOEFL: 600; GPA: (G)3.4, (U)3.1
Publications	Yes

Universities Applied	**Major**	**Degree**	**Result**
Boston College	**Physics**	**Ph.D.**	**RA**
Indiana University	Physics	Ph.D.	TA
University of Rochester	Physics	Ph.D.	
SUNY, Brook	Physics	Ph.D.	
SUNY, Buffalo	Physics	Ph.D.	
University of Florida	Physics	Ph.D.	
University of Michigan	Physics	Ph.D.	
University of Washington	Physics	Ph.D.	
Wayne State University	Physics	Ph.D.	TA

Transferring Experience

Universities Applied	Major	Degree	Result
Pennsylvania State University	**Material Science**	**Ph.D.**	**TA**
University of Pennsylvania	Material Science	Ph.D.	
University of Colorado, Boulder	ECE	Ph.D.	
University of Florida	Physics	Ph.D.	

Interview with Qihua Xiong

MicroEdu: I read all the stories of your transfer to PSU at the MicroEdu site, like watching an intense marathon. It was not that smooth, even dramatic at times. I can feel your anxiety, but finally you won! What's your feeling now?

Qihua: Now I feel like the lake surface without any wind. I am far away from the wavy emotional stage. Nothing can affect me with joy or sorrow. Even in tough times, I have to control myself and proceed to work.

Actually I was all set not to "win!" It was only routine work for them and me, but the bureaucracy delayed the process.

MicroEdu: "Windless lake," it is a beautiful metaphor. When people step into a new culture, their early days are usually full of excitement and amazement ?they are in "honeymoon stage." Reading your stories written one year ago, I can obviously feel this. Now, one year later, do you have a new understanding about America?

Qihua: Yes, you know, you have nothing to worry about in the early days in the USA except for experiencing the fine culture, humanity, and landscape differences between China and the USA. Then you will feel concerns about your work, you will feel homesick; you will feel lonely; you will have conflicts with your roommates and so forth. Every honeymoon absolutely has a finale! But your understanding about the USA is going on. For example, you will realize that some warm-hearted, friendly Americans are very conservative (especially in the west) and exclusive. Be observing!

MicroEdu: Have you made some American friends with whom you can, for example, hang out to travel?

Qihua: None! You know, as I said in my story, cars are American's legs. I have no car, so can't travel around the country, though there are many great places to enjoy. At the same time, I don't have many holidays.

MicroEdu: Certain ups and downs in a new culture are really an asset in the sense that you turn out to be more and more resourceful and strong emotionally. Can we know what -was your toughest time? Did you keep a positive attitude at this time?

Qihua: Just as I mentioned in my last essay for MicroEdu, it was the toughest time when I was waiting for my paperwork processing for payment during my transferring. The exact time needed to process all the papers is no more than one week, but I waited for almost a whole month. It was beyond my expectation. I was afraid that I would miss the payment for June. Desire is the cause of anguish.

I had to do good research work. I knew my advisor wouldn't make up my payment if I didn't have my paperwork done before the end of June. Payment is not the ultimate purpose. So I made full use of my time to follow the research schedule of the whole group. Now I can say my performance helps me win the respect from my teammates.

MicroEdu: You mean you have started to work for your professor, however, you couldn't be paid just because your paperwork hadn't been done when transferring. How did you negotiate with your professor about the payment issue?

Qlhua: I talked with my advisor, just as I told you in my online story. He never said he would refuse to pay me for the past June though the paperwork hadn't been done. Finally he paid me by wages, which means I got a half of what I deserved for June. I think I was satisfied with the results. He seemed very considerate and nice, also he was tricky.

If something happens to you in the future, don't be surprised and sad. Just think of how to protect yourself better.

MicroEdu: Had you anticipated difficulties before you took action to transfer? Did you have mental preparation?

Qihua: Of course, there must be some difficulties in the transferring, but transferring is easier than applying in China. When I decide to do something, I know I can do it. This is my style. The real mental preparation is how to explain the decision to my advisor at Boston College after I get the offer from the new school.

MicroEdu: Your confidence is encouraging. How did you communicate with your professor in Boston College after you received the offer from PSU? Was the talk pleasant?

Qlhua: As a matter of fact, it was easier than I imagined. I sent him an email first, but he didn't give me a reply! So I knew calling was not necessary. A post-doctor told me since I had decided to go, it made no difference whether I called the advisor and talked pleasantly or not. She told me, "Don't look forward to him to give you wishes with a smiling face." though it was hard to accept this, it's the truth. So those who want to transfer, you'd better be a TA for the first year.

MicroEdu: You mean, being a TA, you get financial support not directly from the professor, then whether to transfer has little to do with your professor's research plan, right?

Qihua: Correct!

MicroEdu: What made you have the idea of transferring since the research environment at Boston College is rather good?

Qihua: Boston College is not strong in natural science, although it is a very good university, of course. At the same time, I wanted to switch to materials, so Pennsylvania State is a good option.

The minor reason is that all the members in my group at Boston College were from China! I felt like I was pursuing a Ph.D. in China!

MicroEdu: It is an interesting reason ?to pursue an environment with more diverse people. Are you satisfied with PSU in this point?

Qihua: Oh, believe me, my decision is a wise one.

MicroEdu: Then tell us something about the research team you are working with.

Qihua: Our group is an international group. Students and postdocs are from India, Russia, Korea, Venezuela, Gana, Sri Lanka and China. Only the boss is an American!

MicroEdu: With such different backgrounds, how do you work together? Is there any friction among you?

Qihua: We work better because of the diverse backgrounds! Research has it's own disciplines, different backgrounds give different ideas, which we always need. Sometimes, there are little serious discussions, not friction. Anyway, I think we should respect other religions and habits.

MicroEdu: Have you ever felt the lab work too routine or too dull?

Qihua: Yes, finally everything will be routine. But, believe me, sparks come from routine work. If you can get some new things or results from your routine work sometimes, you will enjoy your routine work.

MicroEdu: Is transfer a very popular trend in America? I heard that Chinese transferred often out of practical concerns. Is that true? Then how about Americans?

Qihua: I know nothing about American students transferring. But yes, it is a really popular trend. Most of them are based on career perspectives, or practically. Just as almost everyone asked me why I didn't switch to EE or computer science when he or she knew I would transfer. The only thing I can say is that different people have different ideas. I have no interest in EE or computers.

The reasons for transferring are included in any one of the following: First, when applying in China, due to the dollar reason, Chinese students don't get admitted to their most desired universities so they try to go to a better school. Secondly, transfer to a fashionable major such as EE, ECE, CS/CE, accounting, finance etc., so one can finish the Master's degree as quickly as possible, and then get a decent job. A greencard is waiting for him or her. Thirdly, those who feel that hill is higher than this hill, where he stands now, always try to climb the highest hill.

Frankly speaking, I don't like transferring. I wasted much time. But I also know I am not the man I was one year ago, just like a song says "the face in the morning is older than the one last night." For transferring, wise, easy, and the ideal decision is important.

MicroEdu: Any difference between transfer application and general application?

Qihua: Generally speaking, nothing different.

MicroEdu! I heard at first you sought scholarships from the Physics department of PSU though you will study in the Materials Department. This idea is very fresh to the applicants now in China. Is it difficult? Is it possible if applying in China?

Qihua: It totally depends on your advisor. My advisor was interested in my background, then he wanted to help me get support. He made the effort for me, otherwise it's impossible.

MicroEdu: You told us that management in your research lab NREL in Boston College was very strict, which gave you many enlightenments, especially compared with domestic scientific research. Can you share your enlightenments with us?

Qihua: It's a special topic. Not many Chinese students are likely to be interested in this topic, except those who will devote themselves to research work. Compared with a domestic research institute, it's more professional and efficient. Our shortcoming is the "software", not the hardware. We have state-of-the-art facilities in China. At PSU, I recognized this point again. We should make the research institute DO RESEARCH! Make RESEARCH the soul! All the administrative staff activity should SERVICE the research, instead of MANAGE.

Concisely speaking, there are three key points to improve domestic scientific research environment based on my observation and reflection here.

MicroEdu: Please tell us point by point.

Qihua: The first, to establish an active and effective system to encourage creativity, respect and award creators and original ideas; just like the composition topic of one College Entrance Examination, "integrity and credit", we need to erect the mechanism and feeling of integrity and credit. It is very dangerous that everything in our society has its fake counterpart, including ideas, papers, and patents.

The second, to break the traditional boundaries, such as boundaries between different groups, institutes, centers, universities, traditional disciplines and so forth. To make a network between separate facilities, human resources, etc. It's difficult to do in China. Though we were educated in "the relationship between individual and collectivity, home and nation," but in practice, we are enthralled by the limited, small-grouped interests.

The third, who is the host/main body in universities, institutes? Keep this point in mind, then everything else should service the main body. We do the opposite thing. The teachers and students are ruled instead of serviced. Keep the administrative unit efficient and condensed. For example, I noticed that in the Physics Department of Penn State, there are only 7 to 8 staff in the main office,

including one head assistant. Their responsibilities vary from delivering letters, budget management, academic activities, employment concerns, service to the research (even ordering the gas tanks for different groups). How many staffs are there in a department in Chinese universities?

I believe that efficient administrative methods can help the research faculty concentrate on their research work. This is the environment that our scientific research needs and hopes to obtain!

MicroEdu: I know someone told you "Xiong speaks English better every time when he drinks in the Bar!" What other benefits from frequenting bars in the USA except for improving English? Would you please share with us?

Qlhlia: I didn't go to a bar for a long time. Your words remind me of the reason why my English didn't improve at all!! I often hung out with a Kazakstan friend, but he has gone back. I don't like to go to a bar alone. It doesn't make me feel good.

MicroEdu: With one year of study in the US, what's a good essay for a science major in your eyes?

Qihua: I think a good essay should be like mine. Haha. Just kidding. Well, as to a science major, you should express clearly what you did, what you want to do in the future, why you want to select him as your advisor. Avoid being too general.

MicroEdu: You mean experience plus a future plan plus why this professor?

Qihua: Somehow correct. Mmm...plus idea! IDEA! Your idea about the research field which attracts you. It should be insightful, original.

At least you should have some ideas. Maybe they seem a little naive at first sight. It is better than no idea. Take me for example, I express my understanding in my PS about the research topic of the advisor's.

Don't just repeat "I am interested in your research..." "I want to join your group" and so forth, it is begging, try to conquer with your shining characteristics.

MicroEdu: How did you cultivate your shining ideas?

Qihua: It's difficult to say how to cultivate. Think! When you read and do research.

MicroEdu: Is research experience very important for a science major's application?

Qihua: Your background about the research is not exactly the same as "experience". Yes, it is very important. You don't need the same background in the same research field.

MicroEdu: Just like you from physics to material science?

Qihua: Frankly speaking, not much difference in my case. If you don't have much research experience, you can make it up by telling more about your experiment design, your understanding about a related topic.

MicroEdu: Good idea. Any other suggestions for transfer applicants?

Qihua: When you are here, you will know how to do that. You don't need to consider transferring when you apply in China. Transferring is a waste of time and should be avoided. It is better to get a good school when you are in China. Why not hit the tone with your first hit?

MicroEdu: Denver is an amazingly beautiful spot? Give us some snapshots of Denver.

Qihua: National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL) is a research institute managed by the Department of Energy (DOE). It is located at the foot of the South Table Mountains in West Denver. The mountains look like a "table." They are not very high and the top is flat. The biological link is still complete and flourishing!

There are many squirrels, rabbits, deer, moose, even rattlesnakes! There are many signs on the shortcut up the hill or on the wood bridge. They read: "Caution: This is rattlesnake country!" I felt like climbing mountains and watching running deer, but my colleague always warned me: Be aware of the rattlesnake! Though I have not seen a rattlesnake yet, I don't want to meet one. So I have to give up the idea of watching deers! I miss Denver. It is a charming city. Boulder is even more so.

MicroEdu: Your nickname at MicroEdu is DNA, Dream of Neo-Asian. What is your dream?

Qihua: Frankly speaking, I don't have a dream now. Sometimes, I feel it was necessary to be here even getting full support. Somehow, it's somewhat a waste of time, but I do not regret my choice. I didn't lose anything, since I had nothing before I came here. As to my career goal, personally, I want to do research in academic or industrial development centers.

MicroEdu: Thank you, DNA, thank you for the talk. Enjoy your new life at PSU!

Personal Statement

To be a scientist and engineer was one of my biggest dreams of my childhood. I began to show a deep, persistent interest in physics when I was in junior high school. It was nature's fascinating phenomena and the logical explanations that attracted me. Physics was my favorite course aH through my middle and high school years. In 1989, I obtained a second-class laurel in the physics competition of Hubei Province, which gave me a primary feeling of accomplishment and further stimulated me to the physics ivory tower.

In the September 1993, I matriculated in the Physics Department of Wuhan University. I thought that I had found what I had been looking for. I enjoyed myself in the realm of knowledge. I always reminded myself what Einstein said, "Genius is 1% inspiration and 99% perspiration." I spent most of my time learning. As a result of my hard work, I achieved an excellent academic record and received several awards and honors.

I believe that the most important thing is not what one has learned but whether he has mastered how to learn. As Benjamin Franklin admonished that we "learn ever}, thing that is useful and every thing that is ornamental." Education and learning should explore not only "what" and "why," but "how." To pursue the "how," I participated in several scientific research projects. From 1996 to 1997, I worked as a research assistant at the Applied Physics Laboratory, where I joined a research project directed by Professor Xiangjun Fan. It was supported by the National Natural Science Foundation of China and titled "Preparation of cubic C3N4 thin film by plasma enhanced chemical vapor deposition." I was excited but a little disappointed when I found out that my first assignment was to fix the broken temperature control unit of the CVD apparatus! A classmate and I investigated many blueprints, circuit diagrams and started to fix it. A month later, we dug out the problem and fixed the broken unit. It was a rather small job within an advanced lab. Yet it seemed to have all the characteristics that I loved about research work.

It was only a good beginning. Our purpose is to get ideal C3N4 thin films. The small success encouraged me to get deeply involved in this field. I selected preparation of C3N4 thin films as my bachelor's dissertation topic. Under the supervision of Professor Fan and Professor Huaixi Guo, I found the optimal temperature, reaction time and vapor flow rates. On the interlayer of silicon nitrate, I obtained good C3N4 thin films on silicon and glass substrates. The XPS and TEM results showed the C-N films contain cubic C3N4 structure, which supports the earlier theoretical prediction. Because of the excellent results, my graduation thesis got a high score of 90. Thin Solid Films and ACTA PHYSICA SINICA also published the research results later. Besides the experimental skills, my first research experience told me that even great scientific research calls for steadfast and laborious work!

When I graduated, the Department of Physics recommended me to the Shanghai Institute of Nuclear Research, Chinese Academy of Sciences. The required National Graduate Entrance Examination was waived because of my outstanding academic achievements.

As to my Master's studies, I spent a year learning the required courses at Fudan University and the other two years on my dissertation. I earned 32 credits in an academic year with seven "A's" out of the courses. My graduation thesis topic was "Studies of high sensitive fluorescent imaging system", which required me to design and construct equipment for DNA chip detecting. DNA chip was one of the ten breakthroughs of 1998 evaluated by Science. It was an interdisciplinary field and called for much advanced biological knowledge. So I studied some advanced biological courses at Fudan University. I joined a research group's program "High-sensitive DNA chip detecting system", which is a subcontract of the specially supporting project "Studies of DNA Chip" of Chinese Academy of Sciences. I was responsible for designing the optical path, evaluating the components, debugging the software, detecting the DNA chip samples and analyzing the data of the images. After one year's hard work, this program successfully passed the evaluation by the experts of the Chinese Academy of Sciences. I also did some research work on molecular manipulation and scanning probe microscopy. I had one first-author patent accepted by the Chinese Patent Office and some other co-contributed papers published.

After I obtained my Master's degree, I received four offers from American universities. I made a decision to accept the flail scholarship provided by Boston College. It is an RA position in the National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL). I believe it would be extremely valuable for me to receive one-year training in a national research institute like NREL, especially for my future Ph.D. research. Our research fields are T1- and Bi- superconductor thin films. I adapted a double-counter electrode configuration, which makes the electrochemical deposition of precursor films more reproductive and better optimal composition. I am also responsible for annealing the samples, testing I-V and R-T curves of the samples, screening the sample crystalline structure by x-ray diffraction. We have obtained some decent results on LAO substrates. We are now engaged in doing the samples on silver and silver/palladium substrates.

Materials Science and engineering played a very important role in the advance of human civilization. This is evident from the names of historical epochs, from the Stone Age through the Bronze and Iron Ages to the ongoing Silicon Age. Now the materials science research no longer localizes in understanding processing, structure, properties and performance independently.
Rather, the logical connection among the "four elements" is designing! "The ultimate goal is to design a structural component for a set of specified environmental conditions and for a predictable lifetime" (Science vol.288 Pathways of Discovery "Designing a New Material World" and Rev. Mod. Phys. vol.71, No.2, Centenary 1999 "Materials Physics"). I think this is the charm and fascination of materials science.

The discovery of fullerenes in 1985 and carbon nanotubes in 1991 stimulated a deluge of carbon science research. Scientists have reasons to believe that there exist a variety of novel carbon bulk phases yet to be discovered and explored in the carbon phase diagrams. In addition, there are many potential applications of the novel carbon allotropes that need to be explored. It is believed that progress in this field will benefit not only from the coupling between experiments and theory but also the talent from diverse science backgrounds (M. S. Dresselhaus, Annu. Rev. Mater. Sci.1997). Since 1997, I have shown strong interest in the research of the carbon nanotubes. I believe that my interdisciplinary research training will make me competent for future research. I

have read the recent nanotube related reviews, books and other publications. I have decided to select this field as my Ph.D. research topic and devote myself to this promising field. Professor Peter C. Eklund did some excellent research work on carbon nanotubes and I hope to join his research group. I have great confidence for three reasons: one is that I have a strong and broad physics background; the other is that I have sufficient interdisciplinary training and experience in materials research; the third is that I have talented practical skills and independent working abilities. I am sure that I am qualified for your research programs and can contribute to them.

The idea that I want to obtain a Ph.D. degree and to be a qualified researcher encouraged me to come to this great nation. When I receive my Ph.D. degree, I will return to China to serve my Motherland without hesitation. Mr. Jun Hu, who is a professor at Shanghai Institute of Nuclear Research and Shanghai Jiao Tong University, has invited me to join his research group when I graduate. I will devote myself to the scientific research and development of China for the rest of my life!

Chapter 21 Jack Lin, University of Pennsylvania

Jack Lin's Profile

Name	Lin, Jack
Gender	Male
Undergraduate	Architecture Tongji University
Scores	GRE: 2230; TOEFL: 613; GPA: 3.4
Publications	Yes
Schools Applied	14 universities
Target Major	Architecture/Urban Plan
Got in	9 out of 14 granted offers
Went to	University of Pennsylvania

Personal Statement

I hope I'll become a prominent professor and researcher of Architecture in China in the new millennium. Through a systematic study, my purpose in pursuing a Ph.D. is to obtain both theoretical abilities and applicable skills on a higher level. Among the concentrations of your Ph.D. program in Architecture, I have great interest in the field of Urban Design.

Urban places require design, guidance and careful management to facilitate both a high quality of life and more resource-sensitive environments. In China, urban design emerged as an independent discipline only recently. Fortunately, more and more attention has been paid to it. As a result of changes in the business and economic sectors, Chinese cities are renovating and expanding at an unprecedented pace. Under these circumstances, professionals who can deal creatively with urban design problems within existing cities and at the growth edge of metropolis are in great demand. Land use law and related regulations are also under considerable revision.

As an architect and researcher in the Architectural Design and Research Institute of Tongji University, I have gained much experience through my involvement in urban design projects. In these projects, such as Nanjing Road Re-Development, we were confronted with some challenging problems. Nanjing Road is the most famous commercial district with a history of over 150 years and is regarded as "Architecture Symposium of the world" because of its variety of architectural styles. The urban design is initiated from the restudy of the special context of the district. Based on this analysis, I explored how to develop new cultural and commercial functions while conserving its historical heritage in both the formal and political aspects.

These practical experiences greatly stimulated me to further my study in the area of urban design. Particularly, I have great interest in the issues concerning revitalization and redevelopment of a traditional downtown. This subject is especially meaningful to the developing nations with rich

cultural heritages, like China.

The Ph.D. program of architecture at the University of Pennsylvania has a worldwide reputation. The faculty in the area of urban design is especially strong. The rich academic atmosphere and varieties of exhibitions and lectures will put me in touch with the world's cutting edge of architecture. Furthermore, its location in Philadelphia will provide me with a unique perspective on the challenges facing US urban areas in the 21st Century.

I have a strong background in architecture and significant experience in the East Asian region. I received my Master of Architecture degree as an honored graduate from Tongji University, which has the most prestigious architecture programs in China. During my study there, I took great interest in public policy and urban development issues. I achieved deeper understanding of urban design through my professional career as an architect at one of the topmost architectural institutes in China. Built on my solid academic background and practical experience, the proposed Ph.D. education will provide me with a broader view and exceptional creativity in seeking alternative solutions of the dilemmas of contemporary China.

In the coming century, I would like to serve my nation as a professor and researcher in Architecture. To be more competitive in such a multi-dimensional field, Ph.D. study in architecture is the key.

Chapter 22 Dong Fan, Baylor College of Medicine

Dong Fan's Profile

Name	Dong, Fan
Gender	Male
Graduate	MS, School of Life Science, Fudan University
Undergraduate	BS, School of Life Science, Fudan University
Scores	GRE: 2110; GRE Sub: 95%; TOEFL: 660; TWE: 4.0; GPA (G)3.5, (U)3.5
Publications	Yes

Universities Applied	**Major**	**Degree**	**Result**
Baylor College of Medicine	**Molecular & Human Genetics**	**Ph.D.**	**Fellowship**
Case Western Reserve University	Molecular & Human Genetics	Ph.D.	
Cornell University	Molecular & Human Genetics	Ph.D.	Fellowship
Harvard University	Molecular & Human Genetics	Ph.D.	
Massachusetts Institute of Technology	Molecular & Human Genetics	Ph.D.	
University of Michigan	Molecular & Human Genetics	Ph.D.	Fellowship
University of Texas, Houston Health Center	Molecular & Human Genetics	Ph.D.	Fellowship

Statement of Purpose

My fascination in life science grew gradually as I was very surprised to learn that it is the small DNA that fundamentally determines the big difference between health and disease. Consequently, in the prestigious School of Life Sciences, Fudan University, I had the chance to be systematically trained as a researcher in molecular biology, into which I am ready to involve my whole life.

My Background and Research Experience

Because of my excellent performance in high school, waived of the National College Entrance Examination, I entered Fudan University in 1994. In the School if Life Sciences, one of the top 3 in China, I was exposed to large quantities of modern biological knowledge about biochemistry, cell biology, microbiology and genetics. I cherished this chance greatly and worked very hard. As a result, I achieved an excellent academic record during my undergraduate and graduate study, ranking top 2 in my class. The scholarships and honors I earned are the reflections of my academic achievements during my 6 years study in Fudan University.

In 1997 I joined the Human Gene Research Group, which is led by Professor (name) in the State Key Laboratory of Genetic Engineering. The group is very famous for its research in novel human disease gene cloning and characterization in China. Thus I have been doing research related to human genetics for 4 years. During the first two years in the lab, I did so-called in-silicon

experiments through the Internet. The rationale is to obtain a complete or nearly complete cDNA sequence with probes by retrieving ESTs homologous to the probes from NCBI's GenBank and then assembling them to get a contig with computer programs in GCG package.
In this way I successfully obtained more than 20 novel human genes, some of which have counterparts previously identified with critical functions in model organisms (e.g. mouse).

Later, as a graduate student, I did full-time research in cloning and characterizing two novel human genes namely PKIB and PKIG, both encoding CAMP-dependent protein kinase inhibitor. The following is the experimental route. According to the contig sequences I obtained through EST analysis, I designed two pairs of primers to do amplifications in several cDNA libraries purchased from Clontech. Fortunately, I got the unique bands from two separate cDNA libraries, sequenced them to confirm after purification and cloned them to T4 vectors respectively. Then I mapped them to human chromosomes by radiation hybridization method. Through northern blotting in MTN membranes, I identified their expression patterns in 16 adult human tissues. At the same time I happened to find another human gene belonging to the PKI family in GenBank database. So in the same way as above, I cloned PKIA gene and identified its expression pattern.
In order to get some clues to study the questions such as "why do humans need three different PKI genes?" and "do they function in similar ways?" I compared their expression pattern and found there exists a big difference in these three PKIs tissue distribution. Our paper reporting them has been published in Biochemical Journal (Zheng, L. et al., 2000, 349(2): 403-407). In addition, I collaborated with Dr. (name) to high level express human lysozyme genes m the yeast host Pichia pastoris.

My academic interests and career goal

These broad research experiences not only enriched my knowledge about the application of biological theories, but also made me more determined to explore the remaining questions in biology. As far as I know, biological science has developed into the post-genome era after the near completion of the Human Genome Project. With the huge amounts of nucleotide acid sequence data from various organisms, traditional biological research methods have been improved greatly through the application of new technologies such as gene chip. Now it is easier for biologists to identify the genes related to a particular characteristic of an organism with the methods of reverse genetics. Functional genomics has become one of the most challenging and promising frontiers of biological research. Therefore, the academic field I am interested in is focusing on functional genomics, including human disease gene identification, signal transduction, and computational biology for gene function characterization.

To be an outstanding biologist is my ultimate professional objective. I think the United States is the leading country in life science research with world class academic atmosphere and achievements. It must be an excellent opportunity to be trained formally in such an environment.
My systematic biological background, deep-grounded research experience and great enthusiasm to undercover the biological unknown space proves my commitment to a Ph.D. program at your University.

Why Baylor College of Medicine

First, your school is very prestigious for its biomedical science research, with a broad range of concentrations, a long list of talented faculties, a huge amount of advanced facilities and a top rank in biomedical research in the world.

Second, the location of your school in a large biomedical center of Houston provides its faculties and students the advantages to communicate conveniently with the clinical practitioners in hospitals. One of the goals of biomedical research is to improve human's health. The application of basic science research into clinical practice can be accelerated by close cooperation of basic scientists and clinical doctors.

Third, the variety of your faculties makes your school a pleasant and inspiring place to be trained as a scientist. The research projects of your faculty members such as Professor (names) are very interesting to me. I deem their labs my desirable place to pursue a Ph.D. degree.

I understand that your programs are highly competitive. But I do cherish challenge very much and hope you accept my application. If I am admitted, I will be very proud of being a member of your community: At the same time I would like to contribute my intelligence to the variety and competitiveness of your school.

Chapter 23 Hairong Tang, MIT

Hairong Tang's Profile

Name	Tang, Hairong
Gender	Female
Graduate	MS, Physical Chemistry, Fudan University, 2001
Undergraduate	BS, Chemistry, Fudan University, 1998
Scores	GRE: V580 Q790 A680; TOEFL: 623; TWE: 5.0; GPA: (G)3.7, (U)3.8
Publications	Yes

Universities Applied	**Major**	**Degree**	**Result**
California Institute of Technology	Chemical Engineering	Ph.D.	Full Aid
Case Western Reserve University	Chemical Engineering	Ph.D.	Full Aid
Columbia	Chemical Engineering	Ph.D.	
Dartmouth College	Chemical Engineering	Ph.D.	Withdrawal
Duke University	Chemical Engineering	Ph.D.	Full Aid
Emory University	Chemical Engineering	Ph.D.	Full Aid
Harvard University	Chemical Engineering	Ph.D.	Full Aid
Iowa State University	Chemical Engineering	Ph.D.	Full Aid
Georgia Institute of Technology	Chemical Engineering	Ph.D.	Full Aid
Massachusetts Institute of Technology	**Chemical Engineering**	**Ph.D.**	**Full Aid**
Northwestern University	Chemical Engineering	Ph.D.	Withdrawal
Princeton University	Chemical Engineering	Ph.D.	
Stanford University	Chemical Engineering	Ph.D.	
University of Chicago	Chemical Engineering	Ph.D.	
University of Pennsylvania	Chemical Engineering	Ph.D.	Full Aid

Statement of Objectives

Before My University Life

"Naive, inquisitive, and imaginative," this was the impression I gave to others in my earl), childhood. In elementary school, I out-performed all of my classmates in most subjects. In 1993, I won the first prize in the National Mathematics Contest for high school students. My interests were very wide. Besides mathematics, I was a member of the chemistry, computer and English clubs of my high school. With the accumulation of my knowledge and the development of my interests, i found chemistrL as an important disciplinary in basic science, interests me more and more. In 1994, my entrance exam to Fudan University was waived and I selected chemistry as my major.

Fudan University, the Beginning of My Long Goals

In Fudan, in order to broaden my horizon and to satisfy my curiosities of modern sciences, I audited courses in several majors, including biology, solid state physics, mathematical physics, and quantum mechanics. I frequented the library to refer to different kinds of professional journals and periodicals. I tried to keep abreast of the latest developments in each field by attending various wonderful lectures. My hard work gained me various awards including the highest honor of our department, the DOW Chemical Prize in 1998. My overall GPA 3.8 and major GPA 3.9 ranked in the top 1% out of 160 students of my undergraduate class.

In 1997, Professor (name), who was chairman of our department, taught structural chemistry and noticed that I was very interested in theoretical chemistry. He kindly let me do research in his lab although I was only an undergraduate. At first, I studied the adsorption of small molecules on silicon clusters under the guidance of Dr. (name). This project was a continuation of what Dr. (name) did in Professor (name)'s group in Japan. I co-authored two papers in Chemical Physics Letters (NO/Si4-) and Journal of Chemical Physics (H2/Si4) in this project. As a reward, I was awarded the title of Excellent Graduate of Shanghai Universities (only top 3% can receive this award in our university) in July1998 and graduated one-half year earlier and entered graduate school at Fudan University with the qualification test waived.

Of course I chose my favorite subject and continued my research in theoretical chemistry with Professor (name). Professor (name)'s research is closely related to the study of metal surfaces and catalysis. Simulation of metal surfaces is a promising, yet challenging area. It is difficult to find a model to represent the metal surface, since the real surface is too large. At first I studied the convergence of the cluster selected to simulate a surface. The results were promising. I found the point to select a good cluster is to fulfill the maximum coordinate number of the atoms forming the absorption site. This finding is very helpful since we can use a smaller model to represent the surface. My research also tries to solve the problem met in industrial catalysis. The main concern here is to study the modification mechanism of the catalyst. Thus far, I have carried out detailed research on two kinds of modification: addition of halogen promoters and electrochemical modification. The study here is even more difficult since the system we stud), is much larger. The question was how to reduce the computation expense of the simulation. I found that applying the

multiplayer ONIOM method of Professor (name) et al. could solve this problem. The application can greatly reduce computation efforts, but at the same time it also gives accurate results comparable to high-level time-consuming methods. It was the first time that this method was applied to a metal surface. My study on modification mechanism found that the work function change of the catalyst is closely related to its modification effect. This finding is helpful for experimentalists to design a good catalyst and promoters. During my two-year graduate stud), I published four papers as first author on SCI journals, including two on Surface Science, one on Chemical Physics Letters and one on Acta Chimica Sinica. In February 2000, part of my work was posted in the Workshop on Computational Chemistry in Hong Kong, and gained many passionate commendations. In October 2000, I was invited to give an oral report about another part of my work in the tenth National Catalysis Symposium.

Plan for the Future

Having experienced an exhilarating, arduous and fruitful graduate study, I have acquired the necessary theoretical background and practical experience for further study. Although I graduated from the Chemistry Department, mi' interests and my master project are closely related to Chemical Engineering, especially to those on Catalysis and Chemical Kinetics. I know the department of chemical engineering at (university name) is advanced in this field. Professor (name) also thinks that my background is suitable to do research in our department and encourages me to apply to 3'our department. I will take the following chemical engineering courses if I can be admitted: Fluid Mechanics, Transport Processes, Chemical Kinetics & Reactor Design, Thermodynamics & Kinetics. In addition, I am strongly attracted to the outstanding scientific atmosphere, the good reputation and the suitable climate of your university. To do research work at (university name) is a more desirable way to enrich myself.

It will be greatly appreciated if you can give a favorable consideration to my application for acceptance and financial aid.

Chapter 24 Yimin Hu, Stanford University

Yimin Hu's Profile

Name	Hu, Yimin
Gender	Male
Undergraduate	BS, Chemistry, Peking University 2001
Scores	GRE: V600, Q800, A800; TOEFL: 623; TWE: 5.0; TSE: 50; GPA: 3.86
Publications	NO

Universities Applied	**Major**	**Degree**	**Result**
California Institute of Technology	Organic Chemistry	Ph.D.	
Duke University	Organic Chemistry	Ph.D.	TA
Harvard University	Organic Chemistry	Ph.D.	
Pennsylvania State University	Organic Chemistry	Ph.D.	TA+ fellowship
Scripps Research Institute	Organic Chemistry	Ph.D.	
Stanford University	**Organic Chemistry**	**Ph.D.**	**TA**
SUNY, Stony Brook	Organic Chemistry	Ph.D.	TA
University of California, Berkeley	Organic Chemistry	Ph.D.	
University of California, Los Angeles	Organic Chemistry	Ph.D.	TA
University of Illinois, Urbane-Champaign	Organic Chemistry	Ph.D.	TA
University of Minnesota, Minneapolis	Organic Chemistry	Ph.D.	TA
University of Pennsylvania	Organic Chemistry	Ph.D.	TA+ fellowship
University of Wisconsin, Madison	Organic Chemistry	Ph.D.	
Yale University	Organic Chemistry	Ph.D.	

Personal Statement

A top student in Peking University, I am applying for acceptance into your Ph.D. program in Chemistry so that I can further my graduate training in a famous university which maintains an environment for objectivity and imaginative inquiry. I consider these two points very important to fulfill my dream: to become a top scientist in China.

I have performed well in the past three years. I rank top 6 of 170 in the Department of Chemistry. My GPA for core courses is over 90/100. You may note from my transcript that some grades are inconceivably high such as Physics, Modern Biology, and General Chemistry. Concerning experimental courses, in which teachers rarely give grades over 90, many of my grades are over 85. In Physical Chemistry Experiment, I am even graded 91. It is both an outstanding grade and an honor.

Although my major is chemistry, I have taken more courses than others have. Mathematics, physics and biology are all important in chemistry. So I have taken Advanced Mathematics 03), General Physics (B), General Physical Experiment 03) and Modern Biology to strengthen my knowledge in these fields. In fact, the Department of Chemistry only requires us to take these courses with a difficulty level (C). Biology is even not required. By the end of 1998, I have not only finished them successfully but also received high grades.

Good grades in my department alone cannot satisfy me. Thanks to my distinctive performance in high school, I was accepted into a plan called Science Experimental Education when I was just matriculated into Peking University, and was permitted to continue the program in 1998 for my performance in 1997-1998 in Peking University. The plan is presided over by the ministry of education. Its mission is to train students to be eligible scientists. However, it also means a heavy workload. I should take about 40 hours of lessons every week and do experiments on the weekend. But it teaches me how to arrange my time efficiently: And, from this program I obtain a broad background, rare access to latest development and some research instructions.

In addition, I have also been chosen to do some laboratory work, which is a rare experience for undergraduate students. In 1999, I joined Professor Kou's group, which focuses on the catalyst of reaction that changes molecules such as carbon dioxide to more complex ones such as toluene.
Kou is an expert in this field, which is also called C-1 reaction. In 2000, Professor Wang made me a member of his organic group. I have worked on synthesis of some organic materials till now.
All this involvement in practical research has broadened my intellectual horizon and refined my chemistry expertise. A good example is that my article of a self-designed experiment in Physical Chemistry Experiment got a high score for the original idea and good result. Another example is that now I can skillfully operate many instrumental analysis apparatus such as UV-VIS, Spectrophotometer, HPLC, and X-ray Fluorescence Spectrometer.

Because of my good performance, I have received many honors and countless oral praise. Every year I was awarded more than two scholarships, which rarely happens in Peking University

because nobody can be awarded two or more in a year except in unusual situations. One of them, Guangcai Scholarship, is the highest in my university. Only 20-30 students of 15,000 get the honor every year in Peking University.

One reason for my distinguished performance is my solid command of English, which allows me to read journals with ease. My regular readings are Science, Nature, J.A.C.S., Science American, etc. This advantage provides me exposure to the latest developments and extensive knowledge. Also it helped me win a high score in Modern Biology: my final article about enzyme received unusual praise from Professor Gao, teacher of Modern Biology.

My success can also be credited to my principle of being honest, modest and helpful. ! know that to be a scientist, I should learn first to be both a team leader and a team player. I was elected to preside over study affairs in my class in my school because I always endeavored to make an environment in which all people accepted responsibility to contribute to the success of the whole. Through the effort of all members, my class was the best in my school in all six years. In my university, I am in charge of my dormitory. This time my dorm became one of the best and was awarded a certificate of honor in 1999. In a research group, I share my ideas with others and have been well liked by my colleagues. It is a great joy to be a social one.

But the most important reason for my distinguished performance is that I have cultivated critical thinking and a solid background since high school. Via self-teaching, a crucial ability to face the challenges of today and tomorrow, I finished the three-year courses in a 3/ear and began to study some undergraduate courses. I was sent to numerous national and provincial contests and earned many awards including many First Prizes in the National Chemistry Contest, Mathematics Contest and Physics Contest for High School Students.

On the basis of my performance in high school, I could choose any major in any university in China to start my undergraduate study. I chose the Department of Chemistry in Peking University because I liked chemistry and because the Department of Chemistry in Peking University is the best one in China. My interest in chemistry came from my chemistry teacher in high school. He graduated from Beijing Normal University, the best normal university in China. His teaching was so interesting and effective that I have been fascinated with chemistry since then.

In Peking University, my attention is given to Organic and Physical Chemistry. They weigh a lot in the progress of society and have many important developments recently. These developments, such as the use of laser and molecular beam, natural product synthesis and new organometallic reagents, always interest me a lot. My transcript has shown that my related grades are excellent so I think I can achieve much in the two fields if I can be accepted by your university.

My dream to become a top scientist is the guidance of my life and I find your Ph.D. program is a vital step to fulfill it. The University of Washington has an international reputation for research and graduate programs and an environment that ensures the production of new knowledge. I am sure that these will give me necessary training to be a successful scientist so I have turned down the offer that my university gave me to enter into graduate studies without the admission exams, I

think my choice is right and sincerely ask you to give serious consideration to my application.

Chapter 25 Shu Jin, Northwestern University

Shu Jin's Profile

Name	Jin, Shu
Gender	Male
Undergraduate	BS, Chemistry, Peking University 2001
Scores	GRE: V620, Q800, A800; GRE Sub: 92%; TOEFL: 637; TWE: 5.0; GPA: 3.8
Publications	Yes

Universities Applied	**Major**	**Degree**	**Result**
Boston College	Chemistry	Ph.D.	Fellowship
California Institute of Technology	Chemistry	Ph.D.	
Columbia University	Chemistry	Ph.D.	
Cornell University	Chemistry	Ph.D.	
Harvard University	Chemistry	Ph.D.	
Johns Hopkins University	Chemistry	Ph.D.	Fellowship
Massachusetts Institute of Technology	Chemistry	Ph.D.	
Northwestern University	**Chemistry**	**Ph.D.**	**Fellowship**
Princeton University	Chemistry	Ph.D.	
Stanford University	Chemistry	Ph.D.	
University of California, Berkeley	Chemistry	Ph.D.	
University of California, Irvine	Chemistry	Ph.D.	TA
University of Chicago	Chemistry	Ph.D.	
University of Pennsylvania	Chemistry	Ph.D.	TA
Yale University	Chemistry	Ph.D.	

Personal Statement

Chemists are certainly known for dealing with molecules and atoms. Now as a senior in the chemistry department at Peking University, I feel I can succeed because I believe there is much more to chemistry than molecules and atoms. My passion for chemistry is demonstrated by my achievements, including winning first prize in the "Challenge Cup," which represents the highest level of scientific research at China's most prestigious university, Peking University. I have also published papers in App1. Phys. Lett. And chem. Mater. as an undergraduate. (More of my academic information is in my Resume and Research Experience).

Over the past three years, I have immersed myself in the magic world of chemistry, especially in nanochemistry and solid materials. One of my most gratifying experiences was my role as a sponsor and main leader in building up our alumni association. I enthusiastically helped establish the honorable tradition of helping each other and increased communication between people.

The study of chemistry provides us with a venue to creatively explore the world of unanswered questions. Yet another important factor is chemistry's role as an applied science. Its influence is omnipresent, and can often greatly benefit humanity. In other words, chemistry is a science of substantial hope that helps human beings live more comfortably, in better health, and even in a better mood.

When chemistry is combined with other subjects, it can be very beneficial. Now that we have begun the 21st century, energy is becoming scarcer, and new-style fuel cell research is more vital than ever (my undergraduate research of solid electrolyte materials has important contributions to this field). This field provides a challenge for chemists and physicists. Meanwhile, biochemistry and biological research are the best "weapons" to improve our health and strengthen people's bodies. Cancer and AIDS are just two of these challenges waiting for chemists and biologist to conquer.

My past three years' academic studies have given me essential experience for chemistry research. My research achievements considered impressive for an undergraduate. I feel they prove my potential clearly. Meanwhile my work experience with the alumni association has demonstrated my helpful and cooperative spirit, and helped build my character in the face of difficulty.

I believe that man cannot discover new oceans unless he has the courage to leave the shore. So as graduation approaches, I have decided to pursue my Ph.D. studies in the US. And I feel that my outstanding academic achievements can earn me the chance.

My next goal is first class production in a top field, especially performing research on chemical synthesis and materials exploration under physics theory. The combination of chemistry and physics will make it more proficient during our research for the mechanism of the changing of chemical substance, and to get more theoretical explanation during the creation of new materials.
I also believe I will devote more time and effort on my chemistry research in a favorable scientific

research atmosphere within the United States. I yearn to help create a new world that brings people together.

Also important is my value system which includes friendship, communication, and cooperation between people. For me, making progress in research is "first and foremost," but going all out in soccer is a close second.

Based on my three years research experience, including what I have learned from periodicals and the Internet, I understand that Graduate Study at Harvard is a matter of active learning in an atmosphere of intellectual excitement. Advanced coursework is not simply informational, but is designed to pose fundamental theoretical questions as well. I'm thrilled by the possibilities. To pursue and be a friend of Veritas is what I've wanted to do all my life. I am confident that I am well suited to Harvard. I believe my passion and my advanced research experience prove that I am a promising applicant for acceptance into your Ph.D. program. I would greatly appreciate it if you could consider my application for acceptance and financial aid.

Chapter 26 Royer, University of Maryland

Royer's Profile

Name	Royer
Gender	Male
Graduate	ME, Computer Science
Undergraduate	BE, Computer Science
Scores	GRE: V620 Q800 A720; TOEFL 617; TWE: 5.0; GPA: (G)86/100 (U)80/100
Publications	Yes

Universities Applied	**Major**	**Degree**	**Result**
Arizona State University	Computer Science		Waiting
Case Western Reserve University	Computer Science	Ph.D.	
Dartmouth College	Computer Science	Ph.D.	
Florida State University	Computer Science	Ph.D.	Waiting
Lehigh University	Computer Science		Waiting
Michigan Technical University	Computer Science		Admission
Ohio University	EECS	Ph.D.	Full Aid
Rutgers State University	Computer Science	Ph.D.	
Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute	Computer Science		Waiting
Simon Fraser University	EECS		
Tulane University	Computer Science		
University of British Columbia (Canada)	Computer Science	Ph.D.	
University of California, Riverside	Computer Science	Ph.D.	Waiting
University of Iowa	Computer Science		Waiting
University of Maryland, Baltimore Country	**Computer Science**	**Ph.D.**	**GA**
University of Missouri, Columbia	Computer Science	Ph.D.	Admission
University of South Florida	Computer Science	Ph.D.	Waiting

Statement of Objectives

As a Chinese graduate student of Computer Science, I am writing in support of my application for acceptance into your Ph.D. program in Computer Engineering. I wish to pursue advanced inter-disciplinary research in this ever-challenging and promising field, especially in the area of Artificial Intelligence and its applications in expert systems, control systems, and machine intelligence.

I anticipate completing my Master's studies next year at (university name), one of the top engineering schools in China. Majoring in Computer Application, I have focused my studies on fuzzy logic and its applications in various intelligent systems. I followed a traditional undergraduate curriculum for my minor, but my graduate studies have been challenging and rewarding. As a chief member of the research project "Approximate Reasoning on Vague Set," which is supported by National High Performance Computing Fund and (name) Science Research Fund, I conducted extensive research work in this field, from knowledge representation and reasoning to applications in fuzzy control, fuzzy decision-making and fuzzy expert systems.
These works have been and continue to be published in several leading academic journals in China, as listed in the Publications.

Throughout my graduate study, I have maintained that the Fuzzy Set theory, together with other theories (such as the Rough Set theory and the Probabilistic theory), plays a fundamental role in intelligent systems, such as expert systems and robotics. Although these systems look quite different at first, if studied by their abstract model, many common features can be seen.

Nevertheless, different systems have different concentrations; and some look-alike parameters -- such as threshold value, certainty factor, weight factor -- are really case-dependent. In addition, they require significantly different methods to determine them. Due to the broad applications of these systems, I believe the progress we make will help shape the future of mankind. I would like to be at the forefront of such progress.

The success of my graduate studies is built upon the solid grounding I gained in my previous work and educational experiences. Although I pursued Computer Application as my minor in my undergraduate studies, I studied with diligence and creativity, mastering most of the major courses in computer science.

Upon graduation in 1992, I returned to my hometown and attained a position with Xiangfan Municipal Traffic Bureau. As a computer engineer, I was in charge of the development and maintenance of several Management Information Systems (MIS). One of them was the Transportation License MIS, which is a large database system managing more than 50,000 licenses issued to the drivers in a central Chinese city and its suburbs. I fully developed the system myself, an achievement for which I am quite proud. Now, whenever I take a bus home, I enjoy a sense of satisfaction knowing that our software helps so many people. I think of my software as my child. I made it, and feel pride to see it is helpful to others.

While working for the Bureau as a computer engineer, I also acted as a teacher, training other staff to master basic computer skills and operate the newly developed software. Most of my students are in their 30s or 40s. Teaching can be challenging, but I found that using analogies often makes things easier. By way of example, I once used the hierarchy of the Bureau itself to describe the computer architecture. They grasped the idea so well that sometimes they jokingly called the Chief-Director 'CPU.' As for me, they just called me 'Server.'

While they all mastered the skills successfully, I also found it interesting to discover that computer systems and human beings share so many things in common. Intuition and understanding of "the human experience" can make understanding computer systems and problem solving easier, especially in the field of AI. I use such ideas throughout my research.

To build AI systems that have human-level intelligence is a long-term goal of human beings. I believe that an interdisciplinary approach is needed to get close to our goal. I think that I have acquired the necessary theoretical framework and sufficient practical experience for further studies. I want to pursue an academic career on the cutting-edge of Computer Science, especially in the field of AI. This is why I am now applying for Ph.D. studies at your university in one – or a combination of-- the following areas: artificial intelligence, expert systems, control systems, and machine intelligence.

The Department of Electrical Engineering and Computer Science at (univeristy name) is well known for excellence in these fields, complete with an accomplished faculty and modern research resources. I am glad to see that research in Artificial Intelligence at (university name) is conducted in many areas, such as Applied Artificial Intelligence, Intelligent Systems-Neural Nets, and Fuzzy Logic. With your institution's emphasis on interdisciplinary research, I am sure my already extensive and productive research records will be greatly enriched should I study under your seasoned guidance. Such experience should adequately prepare me for a research or teaching career at a Chinese university, where I plan to take a permanent position.

Chapter 27 Peter, A State University, CAD/CAM

Peter's Profile

Name	Peter
Gender	Male
Graduate	MS/ME, Mechanical Manufacturing/Automation (CAD/CAM)
Undergraduate	BS, Design and Manufacturing of automobile, Institute of Technology, 1995
Scores	GRE: V639 Q800 A800; TOEFL 587, TWE: 4.0; GPA (G)3.23 (U)3.25
Publications	N/A

Universities Applied	**Major**	**Degree**	**Result**
Carnegie Mellon University	Computer Aid Design/Manufacture	Ph.D.	
Georgia Institute of Technology	Computer Aid Design/Manufacture	Ph.D.	
Ohio State University	Computer Aid Design/Manufacture	Ph.D.	Admission
Purdue University	Computer Aid Design/Manufacture	Ph.D.	
Rutgers University	Computer Aid Design/Manufacture	Ph.D.	Admission
SUNY Stony Brook	Computer Aid Design/Manufacture	Ph.D.	
University of Illinois, Chicago	Computer Aid Design/Manufacture	Ph.D.	Admission
University of Maryland	Computer Aid Design/Manufacture	Ph.D.	
University of Michigan	Computer Aid Design/Manufacture	Ph.D.	
University of Southern California	Computer Aid Design/Manufacture	Ph.D.	Admission
University of Texas, Austin	Computer Aid Design/Manufacture	Ph.D.	Admission
University of Toledo	Computer Aid Design/Manufacture	Ph.D.	RA
A State University	**Computer Aid Design/Manufacture**	Ph.D.	**TA**
Worcester Polytechnic Institute	Computer Aid Design/Manufacture	Ph.D.	Admission

Statement of Purpose

During the past ten years, as with most individuals, I have experienced both frustration and success in my personal endeavors. But regardless of what I encountered, being dedicated, I have continued to pursue my original goal of research in the field of Computer-Aided Design and Manufacturing (CAD/CAM).

My interest in CAD can be traced to the course of mechanical drawing. In the class, due to my poor physical drawing skills, I always made the drawing papers a mess. This little frustration made me fascinated with the CAD software the first time I touched it. I found it to be so natural and convenient! I wish someday I could develop CAD tools to help other people to overcome the same problem I once met. With this desire in mind, I studied most computer science courses by myself.

At the same time, I finished all the required courses of design and manufacturing and kept a top 5% position within the department, which gave me a solid theoretical background. I also spent a whole semester interning at the biggest automobile factory of China. I cherished the opportunity and did especially well. From it I gained abundant practical experience, particularly in the area of manufacturing. My strong ability in practice and my adept skills in computer programming made me distinguished among my classmates.

In 1994, I developed my first CAD program, a Transmission CAD system. The idea came to my mind when I noticed that the engineers in the frame department of the automobile factory were often troubled with complex computations and drawings. With the support from Dr. (name), my undergraduate advisor, I developed a program that was well received by the factory engineers, resolving most computational problems and providing a graphic library of frequently used patterns. It is at that time I realized the value of being a researcher. The feeling cannot be simply described as "exciting". it is great! After that I applied for the admission of the graduate school of (name), whose research of Computer-Aided Design and Manufacturing in Mechanical Engineering is considered among the best in China.

However, I encountered a rather severe setback. In my last year of undergraduate study, I spent too much time in research, resulting in an academic performance unsatisfactory to the demanding professor, and I also failed in the National Graduate Admissions Exam.

But I never gave up my pursuit! On the contrary, I became maturer. As a college teacher of Computer Aided Design and two other courses in the following two years, I tried to make my class one of the most favorite among students and I succeeded. To make my instruction more understandable and interesting, I always think from the viewpoint of students. I understand that only by putting myself into their shoes and communicating frequently with them can I find what they really need. I also continued my research work. For example, I participated in a project "CAI System for Theoretical Mechanics". My main focus for this project was to make the system more user-friendly to the students. I learned the learning process of our students and designed a system

that is intuitive for them. With the two years of experience, I formed my own ideas about the CAD: to develop a good CAD tool, you must be a good designer first.

In 1997 1 applied to (university name) for a Master program again. I won the highest score of all the applicants in the admission examination. I was admitted into the best CAD/CAM program in China.

In the three years of study at (university name), I realized the spirit of the research: Creative. Instead of the common method, I tend to find more effective ways to solve problems. In the project (name), no longer to be satisfied with only developing a drawing and computing tool, I want to build a real "design tool" that could retrace the process of designing. After one year's work, I completed the tool independently using the "Top-Down" approach. In the second project (name), to capture the intention of the designer, through analyzing the relationship between the features and assembly model, I developed a new algorithm to achieve the automatic design of the features based on the assembly model. As a result, I authored two papers which were adopted by A and B (both the journals were indexed by El).

During my research and development, I feel I have achieved a deep understanding of CAD/ CAM. It is not just solving problems that arise in the design and manufacturing process, but more importantly it can bring revolution to the mechanical industry through providing engineers a new method of design and manufacturing such as: Concept Design to represent a design through form-function relationships, Collaborative Design to achieve seamless tool integration and better co-ordination of human activities, Concurrent Design to fulfill the integration of the product and process geometry with manufacturing knowledge. I realize the insufficiency of my knowledge so I have decided to pursue my doctoral degree in a highly industrialized country such as the USA.

The Ph.D. program of Mechanical Engineering at (university name) has a worldwide reputation. Both the faculty and facilities in the area of Computer-Aided Design and Manufacturing appear to be especially strong. When I am reading the papers in the famous journals and international conference such as ASME annual, I often notice the familiar name of a member of your faculty in your department such as Professor (names). Also I find many projects of the (name) Laboratory really appeal to me. I think I am also qualified for them with a solid background in design and manufacturing, adept computer skills and my knowledge of design method, geometric/solid modeling, Artificial Intelligence, and Optimization. Above all, my devotion and creativity.

After completing my Ph.D. program, I will return to China to do research and continue my teaching life. I hope I will be able to raise funds to set up a laboratory and build a good relationship with the leading CAD/CAM provider in China, to translate my ideas into an industrial product and assist promising students to fulfill their dreams.

Chapter 28 Ale, Temple University, Computer Science

Ale's Profile

Name	Ale
Gender	Female
Undergraduate	BS, Computer Science 2001
Scores	GRE: V510 Q800 A800; GRE Sub: 740, TOEFL: 660; TWE: 4.0; GPA 3.7
Publications	NO

Universities Applied	**Major**	**Degree**	**Result**
Ohio State University	Computer Science	Ph.D.	
Rice University	Computer Science	Ph.D.	
Temple University	**Computer Science**	**MS**	**Admission**
University of Georgia	Computer Science	MS	Admission
University of Maryland, Baltimore Country	Computer Science	Ph.D.	Admission
University of Michigan	Computer Science	Ph.D.	
University of Oregon	Computer Science	Ph.D.	Admission

Statement of Goals

In my mind's eye, the most comforting and uplifting scene is a shining beacon standing on a solid rock; its beam penetrating the cold darkness and radiating rays of hope and direction to ships astray. As I endeavor to craft a truly impressive statement of self for your critical evaluation, the hard soul-searching and retrospection involved can also be rewarding by affording a precious moment of quiet reflection on the past in order to find new inspirations for the future while letting in the beam of hope and direction.

Since my early childhood, the tales and cartoons of eccentric speaking robots have always fascinated me .On my tenth birthday, my father presented me with a remote-controlled toy car.
How my little mind was enthralled and puzzled by the lifeless gadget that can comprehend orders as if it is intelligent! I disassembled and assembled the car in search of an answer, to no avail.
The seed of curiosity and inquiry was sown.

In 1994, when operating systems and programming language were virtually alien to China, I cherished the privilege missed by most of my Chinese peers of being exposed to several computer literacy programs such as Dos 3.1 and Basic Language at Shenzhen High School, the only provincial key school in the "Silicon Valley" of China. I wondered about the entry to the realm of the computer, peeking inward in amazement. At that time, computer science seemed to be the answer to my childhood puzzles. In 1997 I was admitted as a major in Computer Communication by (university name), which enjoys top ten ranking in Information Technology across China.

In the past three years in college our curriculum has covered a very diverse and demanding course of study including computer science, mathematics and information engineering. The unfathomable intricacy of data structure, the amazing dynamics of database and the brain-racking but mind-challenging, programming of C++ made the study not a drudge but a highly fulfilling and joyous activity to me. Meanwhile I was also selected as a candidate for university-wide interest group in Mathematic Model whose mission is to build mathematical models in a diverse aspect of life in a software environment. Besides the annual scholarship and a third-degree prize title at the 4th Jiangsu province- wide competition on Advanced Mathematics for college students, payoff also came as being chosen as volunteer interpreter and technician of the 22nd Universal Postal Union Congress held in Beijing in August 1999, which encompassed 2000 delegates from 189 countries. In addition to the rewarding technical support work, the practical experience gained there also witnessed a water-shed in my mindset and future outlook. Through fruitful association with delegates of diverse cultures, beliefs and backgrounds, I came to realize that no single culture or nation can handle the challenges and problems humanity faces on earth, the common resolution lies in mutual cooperation and interdependence.

Likewise the unraveling of my childhood puzzles cannot be accomplished by Computer Science alone. When "deep blue", the super computer, defeated the world-class Russian chess player, an added urgency was rendered to my quest for an answer. Finally, almost thankfully, I came to see the answer lying in a highly interdisciplinary study which involves computer science, engineering,

psychology, philosophy and linguistics etc. and that is Artificial Intelligence, a system that seeks a better understanding of human intelligence and sensing processes, and a system that values a combination of advanced study in both humanities and sciences. Thus arose a career choice in which to seek fulfillment, trying to be a lifetime student, researcher and promoter for Artificial Intelligence. And my particular interest of study covers (field name).

Frankly, while attending school being my. core task of 22 years of life, I do not have the privilege of possessing a pool of research experience that so many applicants boast. Neither am I aided with a thick, richly adorned resume as applicants returning to grad school from life's variety of adventures. But for my longing to fulfill a personal calling in life, I am encouraged by the thought that my sound academic potential, strong commitment and a firey quest for knowledge will be worthy of your serious consideration.

The MS program in AI at Temple University, with its challenging interdisciplinary research opportunities and distinguished faculty, naturally attracts me as the next ideal stop along my intellectual journey. Like a ship rediscovering direction and embarking on a new course, I hope my study at your distinguished department will not only resolve an old puzzle of a young girl, but also help transcend the puzzle-solving into a quest for the truth governing this universe, while letting in a ray of hope and personal growth.

Chapter 29 Gloria, Georgetown University

Gloria's Profile

Name	Gloria
Gender	Female
Undergraduate	Bachelor, International Finance, Shanghai Jiao Tong University, 2001
Scores	GRE: V700, Q800, A660; TOEFL: 663; TWE: 6.0; GPA: 3.4
Publications	NO

Universities Applied	**Major**	**Degree**	**Result**
Boston University	Economics	Ph.D.	
Cornell University	Economics	Ph.D.	
Georgetown University	**Economics & Public Policy**	**Ph.D.**	**Graduate**
Lehigh University	Economics	Ph.D.	Assistantship
New York University	Economics	Ph.D.	Admission
Northwestern University	Economics	Ph.D.	
University of California, Irvine	Economics	Ph.D.	Admission
University of Southern California	Economics	Ph.D.	
University of Virginia	Economics	Ph.D.	Admission
Utah State University	Economics	Ph.D.	TA
Tulane	Economics	Ph.D.	

Personal Statement

A top student of Finance in Shanghai Jiao Tong University, one of China's best, I have long been interested in economics. After 4 years study and research work in the field, together with a great many practical experiences, it is now my most ardent wish to undertake further studies in your Masters program to scale higher intellectual heights.

Economics caught my attention when I was in high school, during which time an incident that could be called a turning point in my life took place. Thanks to my good English, I was once offered an opportunity to work as an interpreter for a Foreign Investment and Business Promotion Fair held in Tangshan. I gladly accepted it as an honor, yet I didn't realize how challenging it would be until I had to cram a heap of books into my brain just a few days before the fair, almost knowing nothing about economics and business. Though I was terribly worried at first, I was surprised to find that as I went on, a strong interest was gradually rising in me. I began to expect success when half way through the books. I did make it to the fair. I dealt successfully with all those terms and made my contribution to the final agreement. I was enthusiastic with the gaming and tactics in the negotiations and my mind was filled with questions concerning the current economic policies of the Chinese government. I became so fascinated with the discipline that I re-read all the books to find answers to my many questions. It was a surprise to my teachers and friends when later I chose Finance as my major in college as natural science, such as Mathematics and Physics, was considered most likely to be my choice. I was a member of a class especially arranged for students who are considered talented in natural science and I was the winner of many prizes in national competitions in mathematics. I never regretted my decision after my experience with the fair, it was only super clear to me where my true interest lay and what was to become the subject of the career for my life, and of course, that is economics.

I acquired a solid academic background in economics and finance in my college years, exposed systematically to concepts and theories of economies and finance. It was brought home to me how mathematics is critically important in modern economics, as some modern theories of economics are demonstrated by pure mathematical induction. In the National Competition of Mathematics Modeling, which is usually the field of CS and Maths majors, the team I was on won the second prize. I was awarded Excellent Scholarship in 1997 and 1999.

The interest in economics and finance drove me to study more. I gradually came to realize how much I did and could benefit from the experience. Knowledge is the treasure, but practice is the key to it. While keeping an outstanding academic record, I never stopped my research into economics "in action" -- I've been keen in obtaining hands-on experience.

In 1997, I had a richly rewarding working experience with the Beijing International Trade Institute, which challenged my capabilities and potentials to the extreme. The opportunity to work with the institute, which was one of the most important in China, was tempting to every economic major and extremely difficult to obtain for a freshman like me. I tried very hard and was finally offered a position as an assistant for my outstanding mathematic abilities. My job was gathering and

analyzing data for the institute. And how hard I worked to make the best of myself! With my successes in solving problems with my own mathematic models, I acquired a better understanding of the key role math plays in economics. While growing more confident in myself, I was increasingly discontented with my undergraduate math studies and determined to learn more. The team spirit was another fruit gained by the experience. Seeing my data and analyses joining with those of my professional colleagues and advancing towards wonderful results of a successful project, I learned to respect other people's labor and to value the collective work. Fully motivated, I worked beyond myself. I spent all my holidays at work and some weekends even on the train between Shanghai and Beijing. When a project I participated in won the highest prize for social sciences in Beijing, when professionals recognized my work, when I scored the highest in statistics and my term paper (for being well trained and prepared by the Beijing experience), I felt all my pains paid off.

Through my above and other experiences, I am enriched with a profound understanding of the economic situation in China and its urgent need for personnel highly specialized in relevant fields. A Finance major during undergraduate studies, I am always fascinated by the strict and charming reasoning of economics as a subject. By joining you in your program, I hope I can further my studies and make more achievements. This would make it important for me to come back to China and make my own contributions to its development, which is to be, I dare'say, the career goal of my life.

Due to my constant study and practice, I have acquired a good command of reading and speaking abilities in English. I read many economic canons in English when in college, from the Wealth of the Nation by Adam Smith to books by Samuelson. I have little difficulty in communicating with English natives. Because of my contribution to the friendship between New Orleans and Tangshan, I was honored by the Mayor of New Orleans with "Certificate of Merit" in 1999. I helped build relations between an American company, Alexander & Hamilton, and the Shanghai local government and business chamber, when the company was setting up a representative office in Shanghai. My American friends and I still keep in touch and the friendship is well cherished.

Your institution, with a highly qualified faculty and nurturing academic atmosphere, is the university I've long admired. Therefore I sincerely ask you to make serious consideration to my application.

I'm confident that, under your seasoned guidance, I can give full play to my potential and realize my career goal with economics.

Chapter 30 Jack, Iowa State University

Jack's Profile

Name	Jack
Gender	Male
Undergraduate	BA, English, Beijing Foreign Studies University 2001
Scores	GRE: V800 Q800 A800; TOEFL: 637; TWE: 5.0, GPA: 3.86
Publications	NO

Universities Applied	**Major**	**Degree**	**Result**
American University	Economics	Ph.D.	Admission
Indiana University, Bloomington	Economics	Ph.D.	Admission
Georgetown University	Economics	Ph.D.	Admission
Iowa State University	**Economics**	**Ph.D.**	**TA**
University of Notre Dame	Economics	Ph.D.	RA
Purdue University	Economics	Ph.D.	
Rutgers University	Economics	Ph.D.	
University of California, Los Angeles	Economics	Ph.D.	Admission
University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee	Economics	Ph.D.	
Vanderbilt University	Economics	Ph.D.	Admission
Washington University, St. Louis	Economics	Ph.D.	
Western Michigan University	Economics	Ph.D.	

Statement of Objectives

You may find it interesting that my aspiration to be an expert in economics actually began with a series of illnesses I suffered in my childhood. A frail boy, I frequently visited local hospitals that were in extremely bad condition. Initially I thought my parents took me to those hospitals out of a concern over a fight family budget, but later I discovered that most Chinese hospitals at that time were poorly equipped due to an underdeveloped economy. This experience instilled in me, from an early age, a strong desire to do something to improve the overall economic situation in China so that sick children like me can be treated with better medicine and more advanced medical equipment. In retrospect, I even feel grateful to those unhappy experiences in hospitals, for they made me more mature, persevering, and above all, more determined in pursuing my professional direction than many of my peers.

This strong will to master economics, combined with an innate indomitable character, has always spurred me on to pursue excellence in my economics study. To get an unbiased view of different schools of economics, I did not stick to Chinese textbooks dogmatically, but spent much time reading western works such as The General Theory of Employment, Interest and Money (1936) by John Maynard Keynes and Free to Choose (1979) by Milton Friedman. While reading these books, I formed the habit of thinking critically. This analytical power really added to my intellectual depth. Through my study, I came to realize that economics is more than a tool to eradicate poverty. It not only provides an effective way to allocate scarce resources, but also gives us a different outlook on issues in our daily life. We will transcend our meticulous calculation of personal gains or losses, and care more about the welfare and efficiency of the whole society. In fact, the more I was immersed in it, the more I became fascinated. And this intensified enthusiasm encouraged me to work even harder. In order to solidify my mathematics background, I went all the way, rain or shine, to Tsinghua University auditing lessons given by famous professors like Mr. Hu Xiancheng and Hu Jinde. This painstaking effort paid off as the knowledge I learned from those lessons, such as differential equations and multivariate calculus, really helped me understand many economic models.

I have also taken every opportunity possible to strengthen my hands-on experience. My undergraduate years have seen me participate in various kinds of social work that are challenging and educational. From July 26th to October 16th this year, I took part in the preparation for the World Stock Market Conference of China High-Tech Fair, an international grand gathering where leaders of renowned domestic and overseas enterprises came to give lectures. My job was to keep in touch with the lecturers, arrange schedule for their speeches and help translate the lecture notes. To facilitate my communication with those financial experts, I raided the National Library for everything I could find on international economics, finance and venture capital. I also read newspapers, surfed the Internet and consulted my teachers to keep track of their latest trends. Through my work, I have accumulated much first-hand information about the financial straits that Chinese high-tech enterprises are currently in, and came to know what those enterprises wanted most, namely, new blood, venture capital and advanced managerial mechanism.

Despite a very favorable job market for English majors in China, I have made up my mind to pursue further studies. I want to achieve a higher goal in life and to realize my dream of becoming an economist. Of all the branches of economics, international economics is particularly fascinating to me, not only for its long history, but also for the significant role it plays in the development of economics. Many new theories originating from it, such as the theory of the second best, has had a tremendous impact on general economics research. Welfare economics and growth theory have also benefited a lot from international economics.

For a developing country like China, the research on international trade and finance is of vital importance. How to deal with the new protectionism of developed countries, how to avoid risks posed by excessively unstable exchange rate, how to improve the effectiveness of foreign exchange markets, and how to treat the double-edged sword of direct foreign investments are all serious problems confronting us. Therefore I have made a point of learning this branch of economics and have gained some basic knowledge about it by taking relevant courses and reading authoritative academic journals like the Journal of International Economics.

In my opinion, the development of the micro part of international economics, international trade, has followed a gradual yet distinct path. However, the research in the macro part, international finance, is lagging far behind and still has a long way to go. For instance, the asset-markets approach to exchange rate determination, synthesizing postwar investment theories and rational expectation, has taken a major leap from earlier practices, but tests of this approach have produced mixed or inconclusive results concerning its empirical validity. In the meantime, other theories, like international capital mobility approach, are still open to discussion. From my point of view, only when we find a completely fresh analytical method can we truly achieve major breakthroughs in the R&D on international finance. And I really want to make some contribution to this field. Meanwhile, I am also intrigued by some new phenomena in international finance, such as the integration of global stock exchanges, the risk analysis of E-money, the feasibility of a single currency in Asia and the policy control of international hot money. But in order to gain more insight into these issues, I have to be armed with sound knowledge first, and I deem it necessary to further my study in the United States, the most developed country in the world where I will have easy access to the latest financial information and most advanced economic theories. As a long-term plan, I hope to work in a research agency or a prestigious university like yours concentrating on academic research, and move a step forward in this field, which is to solve economic problems in China as well as the world.

I understand that your Ph.D. program is designed to provide rigorous training in theoretical and applied economics leading to research positions in academia, private business and government.
During the first year of my Ph.D. study, I will take more math courses than required because I understand typical Ph.D. programs in economics stress on a strong mathematical foundation. In the meantime, I will try my best to study econometrics well since it has become an increasingly important tool to analyze economic phenomena. From the second year on, I will work mainly on two field areas, international economics and financial economics, and give special attention to topics concerning China. With your rigorous training programs, my Ph.D. study at Iowa State University will be both challenging and rewarding and I believe this experience will serve as a

stepping stone for me to achieve my ultimate academic and professional objectives.

I realize that, given my academic background as an English major, I am against all odds in applying for a Ph.D. degree in economics, but ! have every reason to believe that the English language courses I have had are actually a special advantage of mine rather than a handicap. As a language major, I have read something about everything in my extensive reading class thus broadened my horizon and gained a unique perspective on economic phenomena. Through these readings, I have acquired a comprehensive understanding of different cultures and customs, which I believe, will be conducive to my study on international economics, a discipline analyzing the interdependence between different countries. My writing ability and oral communication skills have also been strengthened since I must, from time to time, communicate with American visiting scholars here in the English department. All these qualities I have developed through English study have become my most precious possessions, which, together with my preparation in economics and math, will ensure a promising outcome of my graduate studies in your department.

My life to date has seen my deep interest and competence in economic studies. Now, as I look to the future, I recognize my continuing need for intellectual stimulation and my desire to establish myself. I have the intellectual prowess, commitment, and enthusiasm to be an excellent economist, and I hope you will allow me to take the vital first step toward this goal at Iowa State University.

With GRE 2400, I Want to Say

The idea of writing something for MicroEdu struck me many times. From the delight of winning GRE 2400, to the depression of being denied by top schools, the whole application matured me.

I had too many things to put down, including my endless gratitude to Jinbo and other MicroEdu members. Without your enthusiastic support, I would never have gotten offers. So, to write down my application experience is almost a responsibility to me.

I am an English major from an average university. My second major is economics and international trade, which draw my special fascination. Feeling what I learned in college is far from enough, I want to pursue further studies in economics. Meanwhile, going abroad to see more of the outside world will broaden my horizon. Thus, I stepped onto the road of going abroad.

Things are far from smooth. My middle school classmates and parents all told me that the chance for Chinese arts students to get offers would be slim. Acting on an impulse, I replied, "Where there is a will, there is a way. If I do not try, how can you know that I cannot make it?" I made a resolution to apply.

However, at that time I made the decision too hastily, partly due to my unyielding spirit, or rather, stubbornness. Also, at that time, I hadn't read Jinbo's 9-Step Guide. Otherwise my life orbit might have changed a lot.

The TOEFL test was a big strike to me. As an English major, I thought it would be easy for me to get a score above 650. Even after finishing the test, I had a wonderful feeling. However, when I received the score, I could not believe my eyes.

Yet I was not crestfallen. I then started to prepare for GRE and even derived fun from it. The process of taking GRE can really make one more mature and persevering. For anyone of a normal IQ, hard work and scientific methods will surely secure a score above 2200. But my score, 2400, was beyond my expectation, and I admit that luck played an important role. The success in GRE boosted my confidence. Losing my usual calmness, I even forgot to objectively analyze my background. I thought I could easily enter a top US university.

It was then that I got to know MicroEdu. By reading its articles, I realized that GRE/TOEFL scores only played a small role in the application. From an average school, without research experience or published papers, I had to try my best to explore more of myself and make an excellent Personal Statement.

The first draft of my PS was full of brag. Jinbo gave me much pertinent advice. I spent days and nights on the second draft, but it was still of poor quality. The biggest defect was that ! did not know much about my intended major. I firmly believed I had the academic potential, but my undergraduate education had not built a solid background for my future studies. I went to the

library, read books, and consulted my teachers, but the PS progressed little. The final version was still not satisfactory. But it seemed that it was beyond my ability to make any significant improvement.

Ordinary personal statement, weak recommendations, and poor academic background, my only strengths were high GPA and GRE. If I had taken MicroEdu's advice, I would not have wasted so many dollars on top schools such as MIT, Columbia and Princeton. But I stubbornly stuck to my dream. No matter how slim the chance would be, I refused to give up. As you can imagine, I have received two offers in economics, both from middle-leveled schools.

Looking back, I have a sum-up. Hope it serves for latecomers:

Before applying, think hard and make a practical plan for your future. Don't apply blindly, or with the intention to keep up with the Jones. Going abroad is not the only way to succeed.

Evaluate your own conditions objectively. Scores don't play a significant role in application. Your PS, recommendations, and academic background all count. Don't aim too high.

Never lose heart. As long as you are applying in the correct way, you will finally succeed, whether you are an arts or science student. Be confident all the time!

Spend time on your target program. Only when you understand it profoundly can you write a good PS. Applicants, who want to change majors, should pay special attention to this since they usually do not know much about their future study fields.

Polish your communication skills. This can be achieved by visiting and writing at MicroEdu everyday. Reading good articles and others' experiences will add to both intellectual depth and communication skills. These qualities will be reflected in your application materials.

Last but not least, I want to tell all the prospective applicants: Strive for your future! Once you choose the path of going abroad, you have no way of turning back. Forge ahead on this road of thorns and laurels, and you'll finally see your dream come true!

Chapter 31 Jihai Yu, Ohio State University

Jihai Yu's Profile

Name	Yu, Jihai
Gender	Male
Graduate	MA, World Economy, Fudan University, 2001
Undergraduate	BA, World Economy, Fudan University, 1998
Scores	GRE: 2340; TOEFL: 633; TWE: 5.0; GPA: (G)3.95, (U)3.66
Publications	Yes

Universities Applied	**Major**	**Degree**	**Result**
Boston University	Economics	Ph.D.	Admission
California Institute of Technology	Economics	Ph.D.	
Columbia University	Economics	Ph.D.	
Duke University	Economics	Ph.D.	
George Washington University	Economics	Ph.D.	
New York University	Economics	Ph.D.	Admission
North Carolina State University	Economics	Ph.D.	
Ohio State University	**Economics**	**Ph.D.**	**Fellowship**
University of Rochester	Economics	Ph.D.	
SUNY Binghamton	Economics	Ph.D.	
University of Chicago	Economics	Ph.D.	
University of Florida	Economics	Ph.D.	
University of North Carolina	Economics	Ph.D.	
University of Michigan	Economics	Ph.D.	
University of Minnesota	Economics	Ph.D.	Admission
Vanderbilt University	Economics	Ph.D.	Admission

Statement of Purpose

As an MA student in economics at Fudan University, I have been enjoying productive research experiences in the area of international economics, especially on the monetary side. I now would like to pursue Ph.D. studies in a program in which I could further my research in this field. Your program is one of the precious few that will set a good stage for me. Being the best student at my high school, I had the highest scores in the National College Entrance Examination in my county, which put me in a good situation to enter World Economy Department at Fudan University. In the undergraduate study, I built a solid foundation in economic theories and quantitative methods, and my hard work landed me at the top 5% of my class. With my impressive performance, I was offered the People's Scholarship every academic semester, an honor given to the students who have outstanding academic performance.

Just as important as my academic records were the research experiences and expertise I got from my internship in the Yangtse Economic Research Center. I joined the center at the advice of Professor Chen Zhilong as a research assistant when I was a junior. During that period, I participated in a large research project named "Economic Effect of FDI in Pudong". My duty in that project was to interview CEOs of MNCs in Shanghai and to analyze the related FDI database. This gave me a good opportunity to learn how to apply theories to practice as well as the importance of cooperation. Further more, this position pushed me to read more advanced economic literature and sharpened my skill in computer-based analysis. The experience piqued my interest in doing academic research in the field of international economics, and cemented my decision to venture into graduate study.

While I was accepted into the M.A. program in the World Economy Department without any examinations, a privilege granted to the top 5% students, China was about to enter the WTO.
What would happen to China's banking system and what should be the monetary target of the Central Bank of China after the WTO? I focused my graduate research in this area. These efforts, among others, contributed to my articles of "Analysis of Game on the Capital Requirement between Central Bank and Non-State-Owned Commercial Banks" and "A Comparative Study of Intermediate Target Variables of Monetary Policy and Its Enlightenment."

The article of "Analysis of Game on the Capital Requirement between Central Bank and Non-State-Owned Commercial Banks", with the support of Gorton and Winton's model (1999), offered a new perspective of the banking system in China. As I found, with the liberalization of financial markets mandated in the WTO agreement and the up-coming fierce competition from foreign banks, the central bank of China should encourage the non-state-owned banks to increase their capital, rather than mandate them to do so, because mandate of capital increase may eliminate liquidity-lacking non-state-owned banks from the banking system. Published in the Studies of International Finance (July 2000), a leading economic journal in China, this article shed light on the optimal policy of the Chinese government to prepare well for the eminent entry into the WTO.

After comparative studies of the international experience of monetary targeting, I arrived at a conclusion on the appropriate monetary target of China in the article "A Comparative Study of Intermediate Target Variables of Monetary Policy and Its Enlightenment". This article analyzed the M2-Y relationship in China since the mid-80's. I concluded that with the breakdown of the money-income relationship after the mid-90's, China should change its intermediate target from the M2 to the inflation rate. Published in Economic Information (April 2000), this article, together with the above one, earned me the Sasagawa Ryoichi Scholarship, the highest graduate honor in Fudan University.

During the research period, I was increasingly convinced that both topics will become more complicated with the integration of China into the world economy, especially with the liberalization of the financial markets after the WTO entry. In order to explore these and related topics better in the open economy, it is important for me to have a deeper understanding of international economics. While I have been acquainted with the necessary framework in this field, I know that to be more insightful, I need to pursue still more advanced studies, and thereby, acquire more systematic training in analytical skills and a more concrete theoretical foundation.

The Ph.D. program of the Department of Economics at Ohio State University, appeals to me because of its strong faculty in international macroeconomics and monetary economics, including particularly Professor Stephen G. Cecchetti and Associate Professors George Alessandria and Eric Fisher. Therefore, I am convinced that it will be very helpful in my research career if I have the ready access to their seasoned guidance. I also believe that my on-going research will be greatly benefited by the broad spectrum of courses and workshops in your department, especially those in relation to international economics, money and banking, and macroeconomics.

Hence, upon careful comparison of different Ph.D. programs of economics, I have found that yours stands out as one of the precious few that are capable of bringing my intellectual potential to the fullest. My career plan is to teach at a major university, where I hope to make significant contributions to academic research in economics. If I should be accepted into your program, you would, a few years down the road, find a Chinese economist of the same caliber as that of yours.

Chapter 32 Cherry, Michigan State University

Cherry's Profile

Name	Cherry
Gender	Female
Graduate	MS, Human Geography
Undergraduate	BS, Applied Mathematics
Scores	GRE: V710, Q790, A760; TOEFL 647; TWE: 4.0; GPA (G)3.55 (U) 3.42
Employment	Institute of Human Resources
Publications	Yes

Universities Applied	**Major**	**Degree**	**Result**
Colombia University	Education	Ph.D.	TA + Waiver
Harvard University	Education	Ph.D.	
Michigan State University	Education	Ph.D.	Fellowship + RA
Ohio State University	Education	Ph.D.	Fellowship
Pennsylvania State University	Education	Ph.D.	Admission
University of Pennsylvania	Education	Ph.D.	Admission
Stanford University	Education	Ph.D.	
University of Michigan	Education	Ph.D.	Admission
University of Virginia	Education	Ph.D.	Admission

Statement of Purpose

My purpose in pursuing a Ph.D. study is to obtain both theoretical knowledge and applicable research abilities at a higher level. Within the concentrations of your Ph.D. program of Education, I have great interest in the field of Educational Policy.

It has been five years since I began my career in educational research. Although I majored in Applied Mathematics as an undergraduate and Human Geography in graduate study, I fortunately got a part-time job in the Institute of Humane Resources Development (IHRD), an important research and policy consultation agency of the Ministry of Education (MoE) of China while I was a graduate student. My task was data processing and preparing literature for research projects, in which I undoubtedly benefited from my statistics background and knowledge in Human Geography. Before long I came to know and enjoyed the challenging and interesting work very much. Four months before my graduation in 1995, I took part in the project of "Counting the Full Cost of Primary Education in Undeveloped Areas of China" of SIHRD, consigned by UNICEF and the Financial Department of MoE. That was my first visit to the rural schools and children's families in poor areas of China. I was shocked to see so many children in China had to study in dark and poorly equipped classrooms, and that many others could not go to school because of financial constraints. The influence of the project was so powerful that the government policy was eventually revised to be more favorable to the education in undeveloped areas. Moreover, the transition of the Chinese economy is challenging the Chinese education system, which calls for a corresponding research to involve government policy-making. It was with these facts in mind that I decided to work in the institute and focus on interest in the fields of Educational Planning and Administration, and Economics & Education in order to do something practical to help those poor children and promote Chinese education at the same time.

The above mentioned research report on the private cost of primary education aroused much attention when it was presented at the annual conference of the National Association of Economics and Education in 1997. This also increased my interest and enthusiasm in the work. Having more and more involvement in research projects and administrative leadership as the vice director of the section of educational administration and policy studies, I familiarized myself with the actual situation of educational finance and policies in China, and gained rich research experience. Since 1998, I have been a co-editor of the Statistical Yearbook of China Educational Expenditure, and have a major responsibility in writing annual development reports on financing of education for MoE, which serves as an important referential document for government decision-making in educational financing. I have been a key member of several important projects, ranging from policies for educational development to educational cost-benefit and cost effective analysis and education for those in poor areas of China, which were entrusted by MoE of China as well as international agencies like UNICEF. The research reports have had a big influence on government policy-making, resulting in a fairly large impact on the education in rural China. In recent years a series of important education policies have been formulated based on the research projects in which I participated. The report on Costs and Financing of Basic Education in the Poor Provinces of China led to initiation of a three-year Compulsory Education Project to improve the educational

conditions of the poor areas of China. The suggestion based on the analysis of the feasible expansion of higher education in 1999 has been adopted. The recommendation for further expansion of post-secondary education during the next five-year period has been on the agenda of the 10th Five-year (2000-2005) plan and a proposal for a cost recovery system of higher education has been put into practice. In recognition of my outstanding performance, I was selected to work as a research associate for Dr. (name) of the Faculty of Education at (university name) in 1998, and I gained high appraisal for both my work and personality.

The research work fostered my independent research ability in educational administration and planning, and the economics of education. However, to address issues in Chinese education, such as inequity and poor qualities, acute scarcity but big wastes of educational resources etc., needs systematic study about education, especially methodologies and theories for conducting research in this regard. Moreover, the 8-month fruitful work with Dr. (name) gave me a stimulus for a further study in the area of Economics and Education. The research project I was involved in, the intensive study in the library after work, and attendance of several courses (Education and Economic Development, Educational Planning, etc.) made me more aware of what Educational research means to the developing nations like China.

The diverse and professional curriculum at the College of Education, Michigan State University is the greatest attraction to me. I hope to develop advanced knowledge in the area of Educational Policy. Under the guidance of your faculty and with the use of your modern facilities, I will be able to pursue further knowledge in the field, especially systematic educational research theories and methodologies. With my work experience, my statistics background and the desire to study, I am confident that I have the ability to accept any challenges that may come to me.

After graduation, I would like to continue my research work in China, to do more for the realization of education for all, especially for the children in poor areas.

Chapter 33 Keji Lai, Princeton University

Keji Lai's Profile

Name	Lai, Keji
Gender	Male
Undergraduate	BS, Electronic Engineering, Tsinghua University,2001
Scores	GRE: V610 Q800 A750; TOEFL: 647, TWE: 5.0, GPA: 90.1/100
Publications	NO

Universities Applied	**Major**	**Degree**	**Result**
California Institute of Technology	Electrical Materials & Devices	N/A	
Carnegie Mellon University	Electrical Materials & Devices		
Cornell University	Electrical Materials & Devices		
City University of New York	Electrical Materials & Devices		Admission
Massachusetts Institute of Technology	Electrical Materials & Devices		
University of Notre Dame	Electrical Materials & Devices		Admission
Ohio State University	Electrical Materials & Devices		Admission
Princeton University	**Electrical Materials & Devices**		**Fellowship**
Purdue University	Electrical Materials & Devices		Admission
Rice University	Electrical Materials & Devices		
Rutgers University	Electrical Materials & Devices		Admission
University of California, Santa Barbara	Electrical Materials & Devices		
University of Illinois, Urban Champaign	Electrical Materials & Devices		
University of Michigan	Electrical Materials & Devices		Admission
University of Minnesota	Electrical Materials & Devices		TA + RA
University of Southern California	Electrical Materials & Devices		TA

Personal Statement

A familiar vigor grasped me the first time I read about Princeton's graduate program on microelectronics. I instantly realized what my next destination is.

This special vigorous feeling can be traced back to my high school days. Bored with the unchallenging contents taught in class, I was by chance introduced to Subject Olympiad, the competition of intelligence. Though it seemed rather like a dream for a first-year high school student, this goal constantly urged me to contest with the most outstanding students around.

Through a chain of screening tests, I finally became one of the five-member team to attend the 28th International Physics Olympiad (IPhO) on behalf of China. On the airplane, our director said, "IPhO is a kind of experience, not a career. But this particular experience may explore one's potential to complete any career in the future." Impressed and inspired by that spirit, I earned a gold medal in Sudbury, Canada, ranking first among my teammates. Several days later when I stood in front of the Niagara Falls, I experienced the peacefulness of seeing one dream come true. It was then that I decided to dedicate my life to scientific research.

The same aspiration also contributed to my choice of electrical engineering in Tsinghua University, whose EE department was reputedly the best in China. Needless to say, all my fellow schoolmates are excellent students. Again I experienced the vitality of competing with them, and the joy of learning from them. Tsinghua provides its students with remarkable theoretical lectures and empirical training, which makes me feel just like a fish in water. I soon adjusted to the pronounced academic atmosphere here. My solid foundation in physics and mathematics also added to a particular interest in theoretical research work. All of my academic records are ample proof of my dedication to studying: straight "A" in physics courses, highest scores in many difficult courses of my major etc. I demonstrated my academic potential in raising my class rank from third in my freshman year, to second as a sophomore, and finally first in my junior year. My total ranking over the past three years is 2nd in 58. Every year I also won top scholarships in Tsinghua.

Experienced tutors often say that a high-score-only student is seldom a fulfilled one, and that success highly depends on one's personality in which the ability of working well in a group is the most important. I have always enjoyed popularity and trust in class and was elected class monitor in my sophomore year. In addition, I led my undergraduate years in a colorful way: playing badminton in a school sports meeting, publishing poems in school journals, winning the second prize in the Tsinghua University's Contest of Traditional Chinese Culture Knowledge, etc. These extracurricular achievements surely diversified my talents and contributed to my confidence.

My internship in the Beijing Radio Instrument Factory and my research work in the Institute of Microelectronics of Tsinghua University also helped to focus my objective. These experiences formed a window through which I glanced at the frontier of science and technology. My major, microelectronics, is quite a sophisticated subject. It has led the revolution of science and technology for the past 50 years, and will continue its substantial influence on the IT industry in

the future. Any initiating achievement in this field demands sturdy theoretical basis and profound insight of experimental phenomena. And that is why Princeton's research areas about novel semiconductor devices and materials attract me greatly.

In this stage of my life, I have many ambitions, the first step of which is to carry on my study until the doctorate level, and then to do research work in the acme of technology. Attending Princeton is surely a dream for distinguished students all over the world, especially the ones who love physics. The intense competition for this opportunity is a new challenge for me and I face it with strong confidence. I believe that, given the chance, an education from Princeton will provide me with invaluable experiences for my long-term goal of becoming a first-rate researcher in the new millennium.

Chapter 34 Leonard, Northwestern University

Leonard's Profile

Name	Leonard
Gender	Male
Graduate	MS, Institute of Physics, Chinese Academy of Sciences, 2001
Undergraduate	BS, Department of Modern Applied Physics, Tsinghua University, 1997
Scores	GRE: V730 Q800 A760; TOEFL: 633; GPA: (G)3.6, (U)3.4
Publications	NO

Universities Applied	**Major**	**Degree**	**Result**
City University of New York	Electrical Engineering	Ph.D.	RA
Georgia Institute of Technology	Electrical Engineering	Ph.D.	
Harvard University	Electrical Engineering	Ph.D.	
Johns Hopkins University	Electrical Engineering	Ph.D.	
Northwestern University	**Electrical Engineering**	**Ph.D.**	**RA**
Princeton University	Electrical Engineering	Ph.D.	
University of California, Los Angeles	Electrical Engineering	Ph.D.	
University of California, San Diego	Electrical Engineering	Ph.D.	
Texas A&M University	Electrical Engineering	Ph.D.	RA + fellowship
University of Rochester	Electrical Engineering	Ph.D.	
University of Arizona	Electrical Engineering	Ph.D.	
University of Central Florida	Electrical Engineering	Ph.D.	

Statement of Purpose

Why Did I Choose Opto-electronics?

Opto-electronics is a beautiful combination of optics and electronics. It is where I will dedicate myself, where my career will be and where my happiness lies. I started to enjoy doing experiments in optics and electronics in high school. One of my childhood dreams was to be a successful scientist, and I made a serious promise to my grandmother that I would study in the best university in China, Tsinghua University. Ten years later I turned this dream into a reality. I was admitted into Tsinghua University with the highest score on the College Entrance Examination in my county that had a total population of 530,000 in 1993. Because I was so fascinated by the splendid nature of various optical and electrical phenomena, I chose Optics as my major without hesitation. When I finished my undergraduate study, three labs accepted me as a graduate student and even waived their entrance exams. I finally chose "all optical fiber quantum communication" as my graduate thesis, according to my personal interest. During my three years of Work I found that the overall level of electro-optics technology in China is far behind many other countries. To improve this, I want to learn more modern concepts and technologies at your esteemed university. I am confident that I can attain more achievements in this field.

How Did I Prepare Myself for This Goal?

My four-year undergraduate program at Tsinghua University and the three-year master degree program at the Chinese Academy of Sciences built a solid base of optics and opto-electronics for me.

In order to find out how to use and control various optical phenomena, I feel I must learn more about electronics and computer control. I have taken most of the major courses offered by the electrical engineering department of Tsinghua. As a result, the total credit I earned during my bachelor degree program was 210, which was much more than the required 180. The more I learned, the more I wished to turn my ideas into reality.

I think seriously of improving my practical ability. In my undergraduate program, there were many experimental courses, such as the modern optics lab, the electronics lab, etc. I treated every opportunity seriously to achieve progress. I began my research activity in the third year of my undergraduate study. In my first project "Design and setup of three-dimensional laser shows", I diligently studied Single Chip Micyoco Control methods and learned how to control a variety of patterns. I also took part in a series of projects such as assembling several kinds of lasers, helping to design new instruments and repair some apparatus for the lab. For my undergraduate diploma project that I worked on from January 1997 to July 1997, I successfully designed and constructed a single photon-counting system with silicon avalanche photodiodes in the Geiger mode.

To get more work experience in academia, especially in opto-electronics, I chose to begin my graduate program at the Lab of Optical Physics, Institute of Physics, Chinese Academy of Sciences. My graduate research has focused on quantum communications. This is a new hot field that involves many subjects such as quantum optics, fiber optics and electronics. I had to study

many new theories and technologies, and I discussed theoretical and experimental problems not only with my advisors but also with fellow students and colleagues outside the institute. I have gained much practical experience of opto-electronics in the process of solving detailed problems such as maintaining the stability of the whole optical fiber interferometer system, increasing the speed of the single photon detector while decreasing the dark counts, and synchronizing the whole communication system. Finally, I implemented the first aH fiber experimental quantum key distribution systems in China.

Besides my main project, I also participated in other research projects in our lab. They are all fascinating and I got a lot of first class experience at the frontiers of quantum optics and quantum information. In order to acquire more knowledge in this field, I attended the workshop on "Quantum entanglement and quantum information" organized by The China Center of Advanced Science and Technology (CCAST) in the summer of 1999.

I also paid close attention to new progress in computer science and technology, information technologies and semiconductor technology. I mastered ASIC technology that delivers unparalleled design flexibility to EDA engineers through an engineering project.

Five years of research experience infused my enthusiasm with a better sense of direction. I came to know what I really wanted and what I had to do to fulfill my goal. Although my BS is in physics, I now prefer to work in solving practical problems. With my strong physics background and experience in opto-electronics I am sure I can fulfill and contribute to a Ph.D. Program in Electrical Engineering. I am waiting for challenges in the future with expectation and joy.

Why Your Institute?

During my graduate research, I clearly realized I need more advanced knowledge and skill to fulfill my goal. The research conditions in China are too difficult to realize many ideas that come into my mind. I consider Northwestern my First Choice chiefly because it has a distinguished educational and research reputation, and my major research interest is a good match to so many faculty members.

If possible, my main interest in the future will be focused on opto-electronics (include photonics) at Northwestern. I feel that I am qualified to study opto-electronics both theoretically and experimentally. It is my plan to engage in research at Northwestern, and prepare myself for both the most advanced theoretical methods and the newest experimental skills in this field. I will make my best efforts to contribute to the advancement of opto-electronics after my graduation from Northwestern.

Chapter 35 Kwon, Princeton University

Kwon's Profile

Name	Kwon
Gender	Male
Undergraduate	BS, Physics, Peking University, 2001
Scores	GRE: V530, Q800, A760; TOEFL: 650; TWE: 45; GPA: 3.58
Publications	NO

Universities Applied	**Major**	**Degree**	**Result**
California Institute of Technology	Physics	Ph.D.	
Carnegie Mellon University	Physics	Ph.D.	
Columbia University	Physics	Ph.D.	
Cornell University	Physics	Ph.D.	
Dartmouth College	Physics	Ph.D.	
Georgia Institute of Technology	Physics	Ph.D.	
Johns Hopkins University	Physics	Ph.D.	Admission
Massachusetts Institute of Technology	Physics	Ph.D.	
Rutgers University	Physics	Ph.D.	
University of Rochester	Physics	Ph.D.	
Stanford University	Physics	Ph.D.	
University of California, Berkeley	Physics	Ph.D.	
University of California, Irvine	Physics	Ph.D.	
University of California, San Diego	Physics	Ph.D.	Admission
University of California, Santa Barbara	Physics	Ph.D.	Admission
University of Maryland	Physics	Ph.D.	
University of Michigan	Physics	Ph.D.	TA
University Washington	Physics	Ph.D.	TA
Yale University	Physics	Ph.D.	TA
University of Rochester	Electrical Engineering	Ph.D.	
Princeton University	**Electrical Engineering**	**Ph.D.**	**Fellowship**
Johns Hopkins University	Electrical Engineering	Ph.D.	
Columbia University	Solid State	Ph.D.	
University of Rochester	Solid State	Ph.D.	
University of California, Los Angeles	Solid State	Ph.D.	
University of Michigan	Solid State	Ph.D.	RA

Personal Statement

January 1, 2000, as usual, I was concentrating on debugging the computer program and inspecting the instruments in the quiet laboratory. After a brief examination, I switched the ignition power on. A dazzling ray of laser flashed, while a distinct heating curve appeared on the screen. The unfolding scene brought a satisfactory smile across the face of the elderly lady beside me.

It was the first day of a whole new millennium when I first gained reliable results for the project "Measurement for the Thermal Conductivity with Flash Method." One semester later, the system was introduced into many colleges general physics laboratories. When that lady, Professor D, initially enrolled me into this project, I thought it was no more than an easy programming task. Later these original research works intrigued me more and more. Often I thought over the program and electronic curcuits in the laboratory from day till night; then trekked back to my dormitory on the other side of the campus still with them in my mind. The raptures I felt for each progress, the beginning paragraph as an example, are unforgettable. This can be regarded as my first step in a formal research career of science. Contented with my fruitful performance and programming skill, Professor D led me to two other projects.

My interest of science dates back much earlier. As a naughty boy, I was curious of the surrounding world. Physics was my first friend. It told me the basic principles of various phenomena. Besides my curiosity, the conflict between my external vigor and internal tranquility also compelled me to study -- a perfect way to unite them. So I studied strenuously in the Science Class courses. As a byproduct of my enthusiastic effort, I won a first class prize (ranked 6th) in the China Physics Olympiad. That entitled me to enter any of the top Chinese universities without examinations. Then, there came the choice for a major. I have dreamed of being a pioneer in the realm of creative technology, thus I chose physics to get a general understanding for science and technology.

My undergraduate years were substantial and successful. Not only did I maintain an excellent standard in academic studies, but also undertook various research works. These can be confirmed by my high grades, and many honors. To facilitate advanced study, I also selected many courses of electronics. Discussing problems with several ingenious peers was enjoyable part of life, too. Most important of all, the detailed layout of my future pursuit with science had been set: Nanotechnology, Electronic Materials and Devices. To invent new devices or improve the properties of existing ones, is the very challenge that I have been zealously seeking.

The idea has lingered in my mind since long ago, and it became more enterprising recently, l,ast summer I started to do my Diploma Thesis at Laboratory (name), an open laboratory in Chinese Academy of Sciences. My subject is really difficult to conduct molecular dynamic simulation of self-assembled nanostructures on the reconstructed silicon surface. In order to get a full comprehension of this subject, I had to consult with many researchers and refer to academic issues such as Phys. Rev. Lett, Mater. Sci. Nevertheless, my program never seemed to work. It thoroughly frustrated me and I even wanted to give up. Fortunately my tutor, Professor G, came to

encourage me: "Your nice program is very useful. Don't you think that you are contributing to the impending modern age?" He mentioned that the whole project concerned with high-density information storage was honored "towards the next generation of CD" by the Science News. Meanwhile the web news reported that Electronics became one of the leading fields in the US. These facts profoundly clarified my career view. Electrical Engineering is a perfect bridge between theoretical research and its applications. By exploring Electrical Engineering, the most ESSENTIAL and PROMISING technology, I can expedite the development of the new age. For example, future Quantum Computers may use novel devices designed by me. Considering my resolution, it is probably not surprising that my research is in steady progress now.

These rich experiences, combined with my strong knowledge background and youthful ambition, drive me to pursue my longtime fascination with electrical materials and devices further. Another advantage for me is my proficiency in computer programming. In addition to my demonstrated works, for example, I have carried some data processing works in a state key laboratory and made a video of the magnetocardiography.

As for my future plans, I hope to study in depth towards a Ph.D. degree in the US. Among the top institutions, PRINCETON attracts me most. I couldn't resist the opportunity to work in the best campus of science and technology in the world. Princeton's N Laboratory is my first choice.
I understand that your graduate program is very demanding, and I have always been preparing for the challenges. My excellence in both theoretical and experimental studies will guarantee my potential for your requirements.

If admitted, at first I will continue building a firm knowledge foundation and later enjoy my pleasure in some high-quality research works. During the last year or so of my Ph.D. program, I will get ready to return to my motherland and take a vital profession. In terms of a career, I see myself taking theoretical calculation, analyzing experimental data, and applying new achievements to feasible technology.

Once I experienced pain when I had my knees bruised during the Sports Meeting last year. But the decathlon competition intoxicated me so deeply that I did not give up. Thrillingly I finished as 4th of all 16 competitors, and the triumph became one of my special memories. In sum, Electronics is the same adventure for me. Eventually, aspirations generate inspirations.

Chapter 36 Tony, UCLA

Tony's Profile

Name	Tony
Gender	Male
Graduate	MS, Radio Physics, Nanjing University, 2001
Undergraduate	BS, Radio Physics, Nanjing University, 1998
Scores	GRE: V580 Q800 A730; TOEFL: 630; TWE: 4.0; GPA: (G)89.8, (U)89.6
Publications	Yes

Universities Applied	**Major**	**Degree**	**Result**
Iowa State University	Electrical Engineering	Ph.D.	RA
Ohio State University	Electrical Engineering	Ph.D.	RA
Pennsylvanian State University	Electrical Engineering	Ph.D.	
Purdue University	Electrical Engineering	Ph.D.	
Queen Marry University	Electrical Engineering	Ph.D.	
Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute	Electrical Engineering	Ph.D.	Admission
University of Rochester	Electrical Engineering	Ph.D.	RA
Southern Methodist University	Electrical Engineering	Ph.D.	RA
UCLA	**Electrical Engineering**	**Ph.D.**	**RA**
University of California, Santa Barbara	Electrical Engineering	Ph.D.	Admission
University of Cincinnati	Electrical Engineering	Ph.D.	RA
University of Illinois, Urbana Champaign	Electrical Engineering	Ph.D.	RA
University of London	Electrical Engineering	Ph.D.	RA
University of Massachusetts	Electrical Engineering	Ph.D.	
University of Minnesota	Electrical Engineering	Ph.D.	RA

Personal Statement

In 1986, with the discovery of high temperature superconductors (HTS), I was deeply attracted by this magic material and relevant technology especially RF & microwave techniques. From that time on, I decided to do research work in this field.

In 1994, due to my outstanding performance in high school, I was admitted to the Department of Electronic Science and Engineering of Nanjing University which is one of the top 3 universities in China. During my undergraduate study, I furnished myself with solid foundations of mathematics, physics, computer science and engineering science. I got the highest grades in my class in many major courses such as Foundations for Microwave Theory and Techniques, Computational Methods, C Programming Language etc. My overall GPA is 89.6% and ranks top 2 among 86 students in my class. As a result, I won a number of scholarships and honors (refer to my resume).

In 1998, I was admitted to the graduate program in our department, waived of the entrance examinations. Now majoring in Radio Physics, I focus my research work on microwave electronics, microwave/millimeter-wave application of superconductivity and solid-state materials and devices. Undoubtedly, this is a promising and exciting field and I would like to devote my future career to this field.

Abundant Experiences in Circuit Design, especially Microwave Circuits

To be an excellent scientist, I must not only be equipped with solid theory, but also be able to grasp outstanding experiment skills. Thanks to my high intelligence and hard work, I almost got an "A" in all my experimental courses. In my sophomore year, I was selected to be a RA in Applied Electronics Education Center and became one of the leaders in the Student Electronic Science Union. That semester, I was awarded "Outstanding Member" of this Union. In 1996, I enrolled in the Microwave Device Laboratory, where my creativity and laboratory capacity were highly promoted under the direction of Professor A. In contrast to the traditional network synthesize method, I initially wrote a CAD program using C language. Then with the aid of this program, I successfully designed an elliptic function filter using 3cm waveguide with excellent performance. I also fabricated a kind of little thin absorbing load using new materials. These achievements brought me the first prize in "5.20" student academic forum of Nanjing University in that year.

Expanded My Research Experience and Capacity in the SE-Lab

When I was enrolled into the graduate program in our Department (EL) in September 1998, I chose to join the famous Superconductor Electronics Laboratory (SE-Lab) without any hesitation. In the SE-Lab of Nanjing University there is an excellent research group work in SE-Lab included a novel type of Josephson Junction and its application in microwave & millimeter wave devices, HTS frequency mixer, Passive superconducting thin film circuits and RSFQ circuits etc. Led by Professor (name), one of the seven members of National Superconductor Experts Committee and IEEE &IEE fellow, SE-Lab has became an advanced laboratory in these fields in China. In SE-Lab, I continued to strengthen my background in microwave technology and got more

experience in this field. On the other hand, I systematically studied the structure, attribution of superconductors and relevant techniques. Thus, I combined these fields and mainly focused my research on microwave applications of superconductivity.

Testing F4IC's and Superconducting Thin Film Circuits & Devices

One of my current research projects engages in the Microwave Near-Field Microscopy (MNFM) and its applications. This project is co-sponsored by the National Natural Science Foundation and Telecommunications Advancement Organization (TAO) of Japan. Under the direction of my advisor, Professor A, a young and prospective scientist, I have constructed a set of measure system using HP-8510C vector network analyzer controlled by a computer. A high Q coaxial (/4 resonator together with a niobium tip have been designed and involved as the scanning probe in this SMNFM system. By monitoring the resonant frequency fr and the quality factor Q of the resonator while the sample is scanned by an XY-translation stage, I have studied the local microwave properties of many solid-state materials and circuits such as metal thin films and MIC's, dielectric materials and superconducting thin films. Especially now, I am doing experiments to test the microwave tuning properties of ferroelectric or anfiferroelectric materials and thin films such as BST, PZT etc. I will further use these materials to fabricate microwave frequency tuning resonators and filters.

Using MNFM, we can easily get information about the surface resistance Rs distribution on samples such as metal thin films and superconducting thin films. I also did much work on the measurement of absolute Rs value of superconducting thin fdms. We used a high Q sapphire cylindrical resonator in our Rs measurement system and calibrated it using another sapphire cylinder and Ag thin film, thus we can compute the Rs of the superconducting thin films under test.

Specialize in Device Modeling and Computation

In order to promote the MNFM system's performance, I modeled the probe with several analytical methods and numerical methods such as FD, FEM and FDTD using C language and Matlab PDE toolbox. The results and the experimental data fit very well. According to the conclusions we obtained from numerical analysis, the spatial resolution of this system has been greatly improved to be several microns. During our experiments, we read the data from HP-8510C through IEEE488 bus cable. Corruption of this data occurs because of external tremor, crosstalk between the transmission lines and between coupling structures. So I introduced the Lorentzian fit method in my controlling program to accurately and precisely measure the resonant frequency fr and the quality factor Q of the resonator who observed the Josephson Effect shortly after the discovery of HTS in the world. Our probe. This has greatly promoted the sensitivity of our MNFM system. I am now trying to use phase vs. frequency fit method to promote the sensitivity further.

Design and Fabricate Superconductive Microwave Circuits/Devices

The low loss property of superconducting thin f'fims enables high frequency passive microwave structures/devices with high Q-values, such as resonators, filters, transmission lines or phase shifters. Cooperating with one of my peers, I have fabricated a YBCO CPW band-pass filter on MgO substrate and simulated it using the Sonnet EM and Pspice.

Planar patterning of high-Tc superconducting thin films is one of the important techniques for successfully fabricating the superconductive microwave devices and circuits. Although the standard photolithography and chemical etching have been used in patterning the high-Tc thin ffims, edge degradation often occurs due to acid solution and causes a negativeimpact on the performance of the high-Tc microwave devices. I also did many experiments to study the planar pattering of the YBCO thin film devices by laser irradiation and ion plasma treatment. The microstructure and superconductivity of modified YBCO thin films were obtained and the microwave properties were also studied using MNFM.

In addition, I participated in some other projects such as the novel type of Josephson Junction and its application in microwave & millimeter-wave band, YBCO thin ffim fabrication, HTS frequency mixers, RSFQ circuits etc. I have also published many papers together with my advisor and peers (refer to my publications).

Other Academic Activities

As a graduate student, I feel it necessary to be informed about the latest worldwide knowledge especially with that concerning my major. About two years ago, with Professor A's recommendation, I became a student member of IEEE MTT society. Through reading a lot of magazines and doing other academic activities such as participating in national symposiums and international conferences, I have broadened my horizon and promoted my major proficiency. As a result, I was awarded the "Excellent Graduate Student of Nanjing University" twice (1999 and 2000).

In Spring 2000, I was selected by Professor Peiheng Wu to give oral reports on my research work in English to Professor A from Hokkaido University (Japan) and Professor B from Tokyo Institute of Technology (Japan), who came to visit our lab. They were very interested in my work. This year, Mr. C (Iraq) came to our lab to be a post doctor. We often communicate technique problems with each other using English without any difficulty. From these practices, I believe that I will be a qualified Ph.D. student in your university in U.S.A.

I Hope to Pursue Advanced Study Abroad

With the development of electronics and computer techniques, working frequency band of electronic devices become higher and higher. So microwave and millimeter-wave technology represents one of the most active and fast developing branches of electrical science and engineering. In order to keep up with the enhancing pace of working frequency and to improve the high frequency performance of electronic circuits and devices, new low loss electronic materials must be researched. Many years of extensive study in electronic science & engineering and current research work have given me a solid basis in microwave theory and technology, solid state electronics and superconductive electronics and inspired me to undertake challenges in pursuing a doctorate degree in the above fields. Especially the microwave and millimeter-wave application of superconductivity that combines the above fields offers me the greatest challenge. V/hat I lack is more systematic study and more research experience.

My supervisors Professor A and Professor B introduced me to your famous department and suggested that I read your publications, and from the publications I learned about the research groups in the Department of Electrical Engineering. Their superior laboratories and facilities deeply impress me. Especially their achievements in microwave/millimeter-wave electronics, RF circuits and IC design and measurement make me realize that there are many respectable professors with distinguished wisdom and foresight in this department. So I am very eager and hope I can be a graduate student of a professor in UCLA and acquire his/her continuous guide in my path toward a Ph.D. I believe this kind of guidance is very crucial to my future academic career.

China, my motherland, an ancient country, which has a splendid national culture, is going to enter a new phase of development especially in electrical fields and information technology (IT). Thus for us responsible young Chinese, we have an obligation to grasp the opportunity to fulfill our historical responsibility. Having experienced both success and failure in my study and research work, I am confident in my capability of tackling research problems independently. Due to the limit in the experimental conditions and other constraints, I am quite eager to continue my study and gain more advanced knowledge at the University of California, Los Angeles. After my graduation, I will come back and continue my research work.

Chapter 37 Jessica, Purdue University

Jessica's Profile

Name	Jessica
Gender	Female
Graduate	MA, Linguishtics and Applied Linguistics, Beijing University of Aeronautics and Astronautics (BUAA), 2001
Undergraduate	BA, English Language and Literature, BUAA
Scores	GRE: V700, Q800, A790; TOEFL: 640; TWE: 5.5; GPA: (G) 3.89, (U)3.7
Publications	NO

Universities Applied	**Major**	**Degree**	**Result**
Indiana University, Bloomington	Instructional Systems Tech	Ph.D.	
University of Notre Dame	Sociology	Ph.D.	
Ohio State University	TESOL	Ph.D.	Admission
Purdue University	**Interpersonal Communication**	**Ph.D.**	**TA**
University of Illinois, Urbana Champaign	Communication	Ph.D.	

Statement of Purpose

Dramatic changes in communication technologies have brought us into an age of cell phones, chat rooms, electronic mail and global commerce. The way people communicate with each other has changed greatly. However, some fundamental issues about communication remain constant, for instance, how to express one's ideas clearly and effectively, and how to maintain harmonious relationships with others. I think it is people, not technologies that are the key to these questions. Having equipped myself with a solid foundation in English language and culture, I am applying for a doctoral educational position at Purdue University to further my study and research in the area of interpersonal communication.

I majored in English Language and Literature while an undergraduate at Beijing University of Aeronautics and Astronautics (BUAA). I achieved an overall GPA of 3.7. Prompted by my interest in linguistics, I entered the Masters program in Linguistics and Applied Linguistics at BUAA in the fall of 1998. My academic performance in graduate studies was even better, ranking first in my class with an overall GPA of 3.89. In acknowledgement of my success, I was awarded the Excellent Graduate Student Scholarship of BUAA in 1999 and the International Engineering Technology (IET) Scholarship in 2000.

Though I am proud of my academic achievements, my greatest rewards came from my working experience. I enjoy teaching very much because I think it is a process of communication between teacher and students and one can learn a lot in this process. From 1998 to the present, I have been teaching part time at BUAA and other universities. Through the increasing interaction between the teacher and the students, I found through my experience, could improve students' learning efficiency dramatically. During my teaching I often encouraged discussion and teamwork in classroom, as I believe working in groups could help students learn to cooperate and learn from each other. I taught them studying skills and methods rather than pure language theory, and I also tried to reform the traditional language teaching style by using techniques like newspaper reading and video playing in the classroom. The students showed great interest in learning English through the media and exhibited enthusiasm in classroom participation, though some were weak in understanding materials that were specifically related to the foreign culture. I addressed this issue in my paper Cultural Barrier in SLA and Its Implication for EFL Teaching at the 4th International Conference on Foreign Language Teaching, held in Beijing in October 1999. In this paper I suggested that the simultaneous teaching of foreign language and culture would produce optimum results.

Culture not only has impact on language learning, but also affects communication among people from different cultural backgrounds. I have worked as an English interpreter for several international conferences and expositions held in Beijing (see resume) since I was a sophomore. This gave me good opportunities to meet people from different parts of the world.
While accomplishing my task successfully every time, I did encounter occasions when communication had to break down due to inappropriate use of communicative skills or lack of cultural awareness from either the part of interlocutors or sometimes me -- the interpreter. Since

different cultures often hold different philosophies about norms of behavior, this difference may result in barriers in cross-cultural communication. Then how can cross-cultural interpersonal communication be most effective? Are there any ways to overcome communication barriers other than those that are caused by language obstacles?

Currently I am doing my Masters thesis on interpersonal addressing behavior in China. While language is undergoing constant change with the development of history, the use of address terms in China has also changed as the social and economical situation altered. Basically what I am trying to do is to freed out how the cultural and political changes that have taken place in China have affected the use of address terms among people, and how variables like age, sex, occupation and familiarity may influence people's selection of certain address terms. Moreover, a speaker's choice of a particular address form in a conversation often shows the relationship between the speaker and the hearer and can sometimes reflect the speaker's motivation and feeling in a certain context. In this sense, address behavior is more important as a pragmatic and sociolinguistic phenomenon than as merely an instance of linguistic performance.

I decided to further my study in the area of interpersonal communication at Purdue University because its communication graduate program is an American leader in this field. Furthermore, I found the interdisciplinary nature of the department and the size and diversity of the faculty and student body very appealing. Upon completion of the advanced training in your program, I hope to become a professional researcher in interpersonal communication in my homeland.

Chapter 38 Yan Xin, Ohio State University

Yan Xin's Profile

Name	Xin, Yan
Gender	Female
Graduate	ME, Biochemical Engineering, Tsinghua University 2001
Undergraduate	BS, Pharmacy, Beijing Medical University
Scores	GRE: V630, Q800, A800; TOEFL: 627; TWE: 4.0; GPA: (G)87.3, (U)92
Publications	Yes

Universities Applied	**Major**	**Degree**	**Result**
Ohio State University	**Pharmaceutics**	**Ph.D.**	**Full Aid**
Rutgers University	Pharmaceutics	Ph.D.	
University of Rhode Island	Pharmaceutics	Ph.D.	Admitted
University of Washington, Seattle	Pharmaceutics	Ph.D.	
Virginia Commonwealth University	Pharmaceutics	Ph.D.	Waiting
Purdue University	Pharmaceutics	Ph.D.	
University of Florida	Pharmaceutics	Ph.D.	
University of Iowa	Pharmaceutics	Ph.D.	Waiting
University of Minnesota	Pharmaceutics	Ph.D.	
University of Virginia	Pharmaceutics	Ph.D.	Waiting
West Virginia University	Pharmaceutics	Ph.D.	

Statement of Purpose

When I entered Beijing Medical University (BMU, the best medical school in China) in 1994, I decided to major in Pharmacy because it is such an essential component of the health care delivery system. I hope my work in this area will move human beings a step closer to the moment when we can eventually solve any problem in human diseases with the aid of drugs.

During four undergraduate years, I equipped myself with a broad range of subjects related to pharmaceutical sciences and honed my lab skills in several areas, such as Pharmacokinetics, Drug Delivery, and Bioanalysis. With an overall GPA of 92.2 (on a 0-100 scale), I have won the most prestigious scholarships and awards every year in BMU, always ranking top 2% in my department.

The rich research experience I got in BMU provided me rigorous training in pharmaceutics and strengthened my interest in it. When I practiced in the group of Therapeutic Drug Monitoring at Tiantan Hospital, I mainly used Fluoresce Polarization Immunoassay to monitor the blood concentration of drugs for which concentration control is essential, such as Digitoxin and Lidocaine. This work ensured me how important pharmacokinetics is in effective thcrapy. In 1998, I began my diploma thesis work on Liposomal Amphotericin B (LAMB). My task was to incorporate Amphotericin B in small liposome to increase its efficacy and decrease the serious toxicity and side effects. After a half year of creative and diligent work, I successfully established a new technique of producing stable and effective LAmB and thoroughly studied its physical properties, efficacy, toxicity and pharmacokinetics.

I hold a belief that a drug is successfully developed only after it is made economically affordable, which demands pharmaceutical researchers have a good understanding of engineering as well as science. Therefore, I joined the graduate program of Biochemical Engineering at Tsinghua University (THU, the top engineering school in China) after graduation.

At THU, I attended two Key Projects of the Ninth Five-year National Program, both as a major researcher. One is the pilot plant test of producing poly-B-hydroxybutyrate (PHB, a kind of biodegradable plastic) by biofermentation, in which we successfully scaled up the fermentation of Alcaligenes eutrophus to yield PHB according to laboratory results. Another project is "I,arge-scale Culture of Hybridoma Cell to Produce Therapeutic Monoclonal Antibody," on which my graduate thesis focuses. By now, I have done work in several aspects: 1) the effect of traditional herbals on C50 growth, 2) serum-free medium design and 3) the metabolism of glutamin. The third one is my main interest because our final goal is to achieve high cell density and high product concentration in large-scale culture, which necessitates a fed-batch strategy and glutamine is the key nutriment ensuring the success of such a strategy. My research has progressed smoothly recently and I plan to optimize the condition of a large-scale culture in a 5-1itre fermentor in the following days. Experience in such projects dramatically improved my computer, mathematics and engineering skills, which undoubtedly will contribute to my future research.

Life at THU is a precious opportunity for me, more than research. The challenging and successful catching-up process in graduate study (due to deficiency in undergraduate engineering background) proves my capability again and gives me confidence to confront various difficulties in my future research. And communication with intelligent people from different backgrounds gready refreshes my mind.

Pharmacy is such a dynamic area that responding to the changing needs of society presents an exciting challenge to pharmacists. To be well equipped for such an obligation, I want to pursue more advanced training in this important field. The University of Tennessee is world known for its leading research in pharmaceutical sciences, therefore a perfect choice for me. Your broad research interests, established faculty and state-of-the-art facilities will provide me an unparalleled opportunity for my intellectual advancement. I believe my enthusiasm in pharmaceutics, independent research capability and strong and diverse background will pave the way for me to study at your university and contribute to your graduate program. I also believe that I will be a cooperative member once I am admitted to your group. My intended research fields include Pharmacokinetics & Biopharmaceutics, Pharmacodynamics Drug Delivery.

I plan to return to China after completing my Ph.D. program. It is likely that I will seek employment at a top university or institute. However, I do not want to be confined exclusively to academic work. I wish to become an important research fellow who has a great influence on the industry, too.

Chapter 39 Lu Liu, Johns Hopkins University

Lu Liu's Profile

Name	Liu, Lu
Gender	Male
Undergraduate	BS, Mathematics, Beijing Institute of Technology
Scores	GRE: 2210; TOEFL: 550; TWE: 4.0; GPA: 3.3
Publications	NO

Universities Applied	**Major**	**Degree**	**Result**
American University	Applied Mathematics	Ph.D.	Admissions
Boston University	Applied Mathematics	Ph.D.	
Cornell University	Applied Mathematics	Ph.D.	
George Washington University	Applied Mathematics	Ph.D.	Full Aid
Harvard University	Applied Mathematics	Ph.D.	
Indiana University, Bloomington	Applied Mathematics	Ph.D.	Full Aid
Johns Hopkins University	**Applied Mathematics**	**Ph.D.**	**Full Aid**
MIT	Applied Mathematics	Ph.D.	
Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute	Applied Mathematics	Ph.D.	Full Aid
Texas A&M University	Applied Mathematics	Ph.D.	Full Aid
Tufts University	Applied Mathematics	Ph.D.	Full Aid
University of California, Santa Barbara	Applied Mathematics	Ph.D.	
University of Denver	Applied Mathematics	Ph.D.	Admission
University of North Carolina, Charlotte	Applied Mathematics	Ph.D.	Full Aid
University of Southern California	Applied Mathematics	Ph.D.	
Wake Forest University	Applied Mathematics	Ph.D.	Full Aid
Washington University, St. Louis	Applied Mathematics	Ph.D.	

Purpose of Study

All my life I have been nurtured in and exposed to the wonders of the world of mathematics. Because my father was the deputy director of the Institute of Quantitative and Technical Economics at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, during my childhood I was often surrounded by mathematical data, formulas and charts. As I grew older, I began to realize that by collecting and analyzing data and building mathematical models according to the data, my father had the power to forecast such grand concepts as the growth rate of the GDP (Gross Domestic Product). I was astonished by the power of mathematics and my curiosity drove me to read as many books as I could in the related field. Gradually, I found that I had stepped into another world, a world of intelligence and aesthetics. I felt that it might be my destiny to probe this world.

With self-confidence and my father's encouragement, I chose applied mathematics as my major in college. Thanks to the excellent faculty who guided me on my pilgrimage across the mathematical universe, my love for mathematics continued to bloom. In my analysis courses, I first met the continuous function under the definition of Cauchy. Then, my vision broadened to the Riemann integrable function space, which is composed of "almost" continuous functions. With the advent of the set theory, my vision again expanded to the measurable function under the theory of the Lebesgue Integral. In my algebra courses, I was equipped with a powerful tool-- the matrix. The more I learned, the more useful I found this tool, especially in numerical analysis and optimization. When I moved into the real abstruse world of abstract algebra, I came to realize that mathematical symbols did not have to stand for numbers; for instance, they may represent matrices, quaternion, or transformations. In fact, it was not necessary that they stand for anything at all! My strength of purpose allowed me to consume this knowledge with delight.

I hold a particular interest in applied mathematics courses and have distinguished myself from my classmates. As you can see from my transcript, in such courses as numerical analysis, ODE, PDE and optimization, my scores were all in the ninetieth percentile. I attribute this ~o my perseverance and resilience in facing any problem. No matter how formidable the computational process, I never gave up until the right solution was obtained.

In order to satisfy my thirst for more knowledge, I kept on reading books and articles on mathematics during my college years. Enlightened by the remark that "mathematics, like philosophy, is virtually inseparable from its history" (Harold M. Edwards, Read the Masters!), I read the distinguished book -- Mathematical Thought from Ancient to Modern Times (Morris Kline, Oxford University Press). It was this book that cleared up my misconception that mathematicians were such geniuses as they could go from theorem to theorem almost naturally.
From this book, I understood that mathematicians must struggle with frustrations and travel a long arduous road to attain significant achievements. When aware of this, I derived great courage to pursue my own work tenaciously and was never dismayed by deficiencies or failures.

In recognition of my consistent academic excellence, I have been awarded various kinds of scholarships, among which are my department's scholarship, which I have received every term,

and the "Information Project" Scholarship, one of the most prestigious scholarships granted by the Beijing Institute of Technology. Now having a solid theoretical foundation in both pure and applied mathematics, combined with intellectual vigor and determination, I believe that I am well prepared for any challenges I might face in my future study and research.

Professor Min-You Qi, a famous mathematician in our country, once said: "A culture without modern mathematics is destined to decline." Now in China, few people understand modern mathematics. What is even worse is that many people think mathematics is useless. Whenever I am faced with this situation, Professor Qi's words always make me, a mathematics major, feel that it is my responsibility to propagate modem mathematical knowledge. In my opinion, the optimal method is to show people how mathematics can successfully be used to solve real problems in the modern world. To achieve this goal, I think, having a wide range of knowledge in multi-disciplines is as important as having profound knowledge in a single discipline. Besides, the ability to combine disciplines and use them to tackle the real-world problems is vital to assure success. Therefore, I chose applied mathematics as my course of study in graduate school.

Without advanced knowledge, I would never fulfill myself or realize my potential. However, to decide which university to attend is one of the most important decisions in my life. Keeping this in mind, I consider (university name) as my First Choice. Sticking to Albert Gallatin's original intention that the university should provide a "rational and practical education for all", (university name) today is recognized both nationally and internationally as a leader in scholarship. I am very pleased to know that (university name)'s Courant Institute of Mathematical Sciences offers balanced training in mathematics and its application in the broadest sense. That matches what I need perfectly. Thus, I do believe that my studying at your university will greatly help me accomplish my goal. The Courant Institute of Mathematical Sciences is world-famous for its leading position in both pure and applied mathematics and plays a central role in the development of these disciplines. I can hardly imagine what could be more exciting for me than studying the heart of modern mathematics.

Among the sub areas of applied mathematics, I am particularly interested in partial differential equations, since I am fascinated by both the subject's theoretical foundations and its practical promise. The Courant Institute is prestigious for its special emphasis on partial differential equations and their applications. This should set a good stage for me to exercise my keen mental power and diligence.

Ideally, I would like to enter your Ph.D. program. Upon the completion of my study, I would devote myself to scientific research in China and turn my research achievements into practical use. My ultimate goal is to make Chinese culture into a culture that embraces modern mathematics. No matter how rigorous the path, I will persevere in my goal. The mathematical universe is a journey that will never end. It is my destiny.

Chapter 40 Yujie Wei, MIT

Yujie Wei's Profile

Name	Wei, Yujie
Gender	Male
Graduate	ME, Solid Mechanics, Institute of Mechanics, CAS, 2000
Undergraduate	BS, Mechanics, Peking University, 1997
Scores	GRE: V570, Q780, A620; TOEFL: 610; TWE: 4.0; GPA: 3.6
Employment	State Key Laboratory of Nonlinear Mechanics, CAS
Publications	Yes

Universities Applied	**Major**	**Degree**	**Result**
Cornell University	Mechanical Engineering	Ph.D.	Admission
Georgia Institute of Technology	Mechanical Engineering	Ph.D.	
MIT	**Mechanical Engineering**	**Ph.D.**	**Fellowship**
Princeton	Mechanical Engineering	Ph.D.	
Rice University	Mechanical Engineering	Ph.D.	
University of Illinois, Urbana Champaign	Mechanical Engineering	Ph.D.	

Personal Statement

I am a graduate student of Chinese Academy of Sciences, under the direction of professor Y.L. Bai. My recent work involves fracture and mechanical behavior of inhomogeneous materials.

Although the rapid progress in science and technology has been freeing the human beings from traditional bandage to nature greatly, a basic fact has astonished me for a long time. According to a 1983 study by the U.S.A Department of Commerce, materials failure costs Americans roughly 4% of the gross national product. Such case may be more severe in developing countries. Out of question, mechanics plays a key role in this field. So, mechanical engineering was my first choice when I entered Peking University. In Peking University, I got scholarship every year, including the "Climber of Mechanics" award in 1997. Just two outstanding undergraduate students got this honor in Peking University every year. In 1997, I received my B.S. degree and was admitted into the master's program of Mechanical Engineering in Chinese Academy of Sciences.

While pursuing my degree, I have been participating in the National Fundamental Research Project "Nonlinear Science" and the key project of National Natural Science Foundation of China in the 9th "5 Year": "Macro-micro Mechanical Behavior of materials and Their Design for Strength and Toughness" (No. 19891180). I have finished 9 papers and 6 of them have been published. I became the only one who got the first class of Yonghuai Kuo Award among over 100 competitors in the Institute of Mechanics, Chinese Academy of Sciences, in year 2000.

My current work is about mechanical behavior and nonlinear physical properties of inhomogeneous materials. Mechanical behavior of materials in multi-scale (under different conditions) is my next interest. With the development of technology, the smaller the units, the more important the surface effect. To evaluate the mechanical behavior of materials in small scale, especially in nano-scale, is the focus for the society of material, mechanics. How do the cracks propagate in materials with microscopic impurities and dislocations in their crystal structure before a crack cleaves the material clearly? What is the best structure for a concrete material under given conditions? Mechanical Engineering has so many challenges in the new century!

I hope to become a successful teacher or a researcher in this arduous but exhilarating field. The significant progress achieved in mechanical engineering in MIT, combined with the extraordinary cultural and intellectual sources in your university, has attracted me greatly. With the study in Peking University and the research experience in the best scientific organization in China, I am sure that I am qualified and would be an outstanding Ph.D. student at MIT. With the advanced courses, balanced program and distinguished faculty of your department, I would get a solid background for my future academic career.