ESSAY

“Interest is the best teacher.” The first time I read this statement in a book I did not take it seriously because, to my understanding then, it was energy, intelligence, diligence, persistence, and maybe opportunity, anything but interest, that led to success. Yet little by little I have come to understand that it is true. That’s why I have chosen, after listening to the voice deep in my heart, to pursue my Master degree in the field of Financial Engineering.

I remember when I attended middle school, my father told me the story of the 1997 Asian Financial Crisis and the George Soros’ quanta fund. I was shocked and wondered what kind of magical power that Soros had that can turn the financial market of the entire South Asia down. From then on I have started to grow my interest in finance and been eager to understand the invisible power behind various financial objects such as stock, dept, options, bank etc. But materials in Chinese are so limited that I have to learn English and Math systematically in order to understand the materials I found from the internet. The by-products of my interest were prizes of various kinds, including a First Prize in Hope Cup National Mathematics Competition and a third prize in the National Scientific English Competition.

To pursue my study in finance I chose, upon passing the National College Entrance Examination, to study in Xiamen University, famous for its research in the field of finance. But life is full of uncertainties; I was admitted by Computer Science Department (CSD) instead. Since there were no official programs for students to transfer from CSD to Finance in the first year of undergraduate study, I felt so depressed at that time, but I didn’t give up. Instead I made up my mind to teach myself finance in the next four years .So I took eight additional courses in finance department in my spare time, including Finance and Taxation, Financial institutions, Accounting, Statistics, Economics etc.

It was hard for me to balance the study in CSD and my self-learning of finance courses. But everything changed when I took the course Introduction to High Level Programming language C++, given by Assistant Professor Li Shengrui. Under his guidance I managed to finish the 912-page English textbook “C++ Primer (4th Edition)” within a month. After that I realized that Computer Science is not that hard and consists of many funny courses that would give me the logical training and engineering experience that will benefit my future study in finance. Submitting source codes before endless deadlines while reading various materials of financial courses became an interesting challenge for me. Also I became active in studying mathematics related courses including Probability and Statistics and Numerical Analysis. I wrote Matlab programs to find numerical solutions of partial ordinary differential equations using the theory of interpolation and curve fitting in Numerical Analysis Course. My active participation in that course gave me the chance to meet Professor Qu Yanyun and soon had the opportunity to join the Video and Image Processing (VIP) Lab.

In the VIP lab, Under Professor Qu’s guidance, I started working on my Final Year Project, the Human Behavior Classification using sparse feature in Spatio-temporal model. I spent much time in the library and the lab and tried out the most commonly used algorithms and tried to find the best solutions to improve the classifiers through improving published methods and experimenting with my own. At last I completed the graduation thesis in time and I was nominated by the committee to join the Excellent Project Competition.

Never content with just learning within Schools, I have been keen on obtaining hands-on experiences. After graduation I worked as an intern in marketing department of Jiaxing City Branch of Industrial and Commercial Bank. Through this internship, I broadened my horizon of international trading and was exposed to procedures of global banking. These great experiences became the tremendous source of knowledge and the great inspiration to my dreamed career path.

“You won’t do anything well unless you are sure of your interest in it.” My father told me when he knew I had decided to major in Financial Engineering, not in clinic as he had wished. The words have been echoing in my head ever since then and have become the guideline in choosing my future career. I think my background in a variety of science and engineering knowledge including Mathematics, Computer Science and finance will make me a very competitive candidate. I have great confidence in myself and my ability of adaption and assimilation once a place on your program is honored.