Miles Johnson

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FUSE Student Research

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FUSE – Personal Statement

Early in my life, I discovered my passion for understanding the natural world. I always found fields like biology, physics, chemistry, and astronomy to be deeply fascinating, and these fields captured attention and imagination throughout my early adolescence. However, specializing in all these fields is impossible, and my passion desperately required direction. While attending Flowery Branch High School in my senior year, I met two people that would change my life’s direction forever – my A.P. Physics instructor Mr. Keith Crandall and my engineering instructor Mr. Ean Sonnier. Mr. Crandall was a fantastic instructor who introduced me to physics, and he laid the foundation for my choice of major in college. His enthusiastic lecturing style and his apparent passion for physics was a massive source of inspiration for me. Mr. Sonnier taught me valuable lessons in professionalism and ethics while also abetting my interest in technical fields.

I started my undergraduate career as a computer science major at the University of North Georgia, but, after taking a few computer science courses, I found that computer science wasn’t providing the fulfilment I desired. I took Introductory Physics II as per the requirements of the computer science degree plan, and I changed my major to physics after that semester. There were many bumps on the road to my degree in physics – the most impactful of which was when I contracted a very serious blood infection known as H. pylori during my sophomore year. I contracted the disease sometime that previous summer, and it caused me to lose forty pounds in the span of about a month. The disease prevented absorbing water and nutrients from food, and it came to a climax when I collapsed in class due to severe dehydration. I made it to the hospital, and I began my long road to recovery. Unfortunately, I had to take a complete medical withdrawal from that semester; this significantly slowed my academic progress. After I recovered and reenrolled at UNG, I had switched my major to physics, and began a full-time position as a manager at a local Dahlonega pizza restaurant.

At first, it was difficult to balance a full-time managerial position while also being a full-time student. This transition was hard on my grades, and it became clear to me that something needed to change if I were to succeed. Not working full-time was not an option, so I decided to subject myself to a strict disciplinary regimen, and I began to carefully plan how I would use my time. This strategy was met with a lot of success, and I began making the good grades I had been making when I started as an undergraduate.