

May 04, 2017

Dear Harvard Office of Undergraduate Admissions,

My name is Mayank Mishra and I am currently on the waiting list for admission to Harvard College. Harvard is my ultimate dream school and I am sincerely hoping that I will get a chance to study there. I have been to Harvard's campus many times over the last four years as my sister is studying there, and this has given me an opportunity to experience the campus culture up close. I have witnessed firsthand the student body and the unique ways each and every student is challenged. I would like to provide some of the reasons for why I think Harvard is the best fit for me.

I'm an Indian immigrants' son, straight A student and computer technology geek. I am a second degree black belt and an NPR aficionado. I am an undocumented migrant from Honduras. I am a Dine Native American inner city child who just wanted a bag of chips. I am an African-American teen trying to keep his reputation while trying to win a speech and debate competition. I am a Star Wars nerd (May the *fourth* be with you!)

I want to go to Harvard because it challenges students, because strength is built through the pain of the forge and the persistence of the hammer. But any half decent chemist will tell you, it's not just how hard the hammer hits the metal, but what the metal is made out of. I may not be from Honduras or have native American blood in my veins, and I certainly do not have a street cred to maintain. But I carry each person's story. With each narrative, I grow.

Harvard doesn't just offer a challenging curriculum. It offers a diverse community. I may not have experienced half the struggle and difficulty others have faced, but I wish to learn and grow from the experiences of the whole community. A community that is tempered and built out of each individual's struggle and now the collective toil.

This is why Harvard is the best fit for me. I understand my place and my privilege. I want the skills and strength to empower and build communities to enact change, but in order to do so I must put my privilege in context. Harvard would enable me to form a bond with the nation's best, brightest and most diverse, and help cultivate my skills and perspective.

I would like to convey some of my recent accomplishments in the hopes of increasing my chances to gain admission. I have just been named as a US Presidential Scholar. In fact, I am the first student ever from my school to have been named as a Presidential Scholar. I have been awarded the prestigious Coca-Cola scholarship and the Comcast Leaders and Achievers scholarship. I am only the second student ever from my school to have won the Coca-Cola scholarship. I am also semi-finalist for the National Honor Society scholarship.

Harvard is my highest priority for a college education, and if offered admission, I will immediately accept and enroll without any hesitation. I really hope that you will look at my up-to-date high school record favorably and provide me a chance to study at Harvard. Please let me know if you need any information about me.

Thank you very much.

Mayank Mishra

1. **The United States Presidential Scholar:** I have been named as one of 150 US Presidential Scholar. This program recognizes and honors some of our nation's most distinguished graduating high school seniors. I am the first student ever from my school to have been named a semifinalist, as well as the first ever student to become a scholar.
2. **Coca-Cola Scholar:** I have been awarded the Coca-Cola scholarship. This is an achievement-based scholarship awarded to graduating high school seniors for their capacity to lead and serve, as well as their commitment to making a significant impact on their schools and communities. Only 150 students received this award from nearly 86,000 applicants this year. I am only the second student ever from my school to have been awarded this scholarship.
3. **National Honor Society Scholarship: Semi-finalist:** I have been selected as a semi-finalist for the prestigious National Honors Society Scholarship. This national scholarship is awarded to the outstanding senior NSH members. Only 400 applicants have been selected as semi-finalists from a pool of more than 9,000 applicants.
4. **The Comcast Leaders and Achievers Scholarship: Winner:** I have been awarded the prestigious Comcast Leaders and Achievers scholarship, which is awarded to high school seniors nation-wide on the basis of extensive community service, academics and demonstrated leadership. Please see <http://corporate.comcast.com/news-information/news-feed/recognizing-the-best-and-brightest-nationwide> for details.
5. **Taking Club Code to the Next Level:** I started the Intro to Programming club (Club Code) in my sophomore year with the aim to teach middle school students how to program. Since then, I have taken this club to the next level by expanding it to public libraries around Colorado, including Louisville, Lafayette and Boulder public libraries. I have trained student teachers (ones who were in my first Intro to Programming class!) to teach the material at the other libraries and continue this club after I have graduated from high school. I am also currently in the process of registering the club as a 501 (c)(3) nonprofit. Please see <https://mmishra2112.github.io/ClubCode/> for Club Code details.
6. **National Speech & Debate Tournament Qualifier:** I have won first place in National Extemporaneous Speaking (NX) at the Rocky Mountain North NSDA National Qualifier Tournament, and have qualified to participate in the National Speech & Debate Tournament to be held in June 2017 in Birmingham, Alabama.
7. **Harvard Model United Nations 2017: Verbal Commendation:** I was awarded verbal commendation (equivalent of fourth place) in my council of more than 200 delegates in the Harvard Model United Nations 2017 conference. This award is given on the basis of effectively representing one's country's stance, putting forward relevant resolutions, and providing significant leadership within the council.
8. **Arduino-based sprinkler system:** I have led the development of my school gardens since my freshman year when they were a little more than three wooden boxes. As a leader of the

National Junior Honors Society and later the National Honors Society, I have helped transform these gardens that are now full of organic fruits and vegetables along with an outdoor classroom and an agriculture related curriculum with scientific investigations carried out in real time. I have recently developed and deployed a smart, Arduino-based sprinkler system that senses soil moisture and waters the plants only when needed, thus conserving water.

9. **Vegetarian Resource Group Scholarship:** Finalist: I am one of ten finalists out of more than 300 applicants for the prestigious Vegetarian Resource Group Scholarship, which is awarded to graduating U.S. high school students who have promoted vegetarianism in their schools and/or communities. My four-year long, continued effort in developing my school gardens and bringing organic fruits and vegetables directly to the students' mouths has helped me reach this stage. Two scholarship winners will be announced in May.
10. **National Merit Scholarship:** Winner: I have been selected as one of the 15,000 students to receive the national merit scholarship. This honor comes from both my SAT and PSAT test scores and a separate written application.
11. **Poetry Out Loud State Finalist**: I have ranked in the top eight finalists in the 2017 Colorado State Poetry Out Loud competition. Before that, I won first place in the High School Poetry Out Loud competition.
12. **American Legion Colorado Boys State Counselor**: I have been selected as one of ten American Legion Colorado Boys State Counselor for 2017. Counselors are selected from the 2016 Colorado Boys State citizens who were identified by the staff as standout citizens.