**Why would you like to attend this program, and how does it fit into your long term personal goals? What do you hope to gain from, and contribute to, this program?**

Video game is a culturally significant product of the modern time with a promising prospect. As a veteran game player, I find online gaming fulfilling in many ways. In addition to the rich story line and spectacular graphics, it brings people from all walks of life together. Behind the screens and the network cables are real people just like me. The virtual world fosters real relationships. I have harvested friendship and even love in it. Gaming is an integral part of my life.

Online games can be a powerful form of cultural expression, reflected in the culturally inspired characters, scenes, and story line. Take for example the Korean fantasy martial-arts multiplayer role-playing game Blade & Soul developed by NCSOFT. Through its innovative game engine, every frame of this game reveals an exquisite and luxurious combination of oriental and western culture. In recent years, the domestic games have all come with this level of refinement in terms of artistry and playability, a reflection of a long accumulation of cultural wealth that conserves the traditional value and beliefs and at the same time yields a tangible product.

Online games have massive influence over the traditional cultural and entertainment industries like film, music, advertising, and literature. The success in the gaming sector allows the game makers to extend their reach beyond the traditional market. Popular games like Dragon Valley, World of Warcraft and Assassin's Creed have all come out with big screen adaptations recently. The movie goers visit the theatres not just for the gorgeous cast and dazzling special effects but also for an alternative experience of the games they enjoy. My father is award-winning movie director. It is my dream to shoot one of such films with him some day.

Almost all competitive games hold annual contests, sometimes with events bigger than the tour of a music star. Teams flock to the competitions after the prize money, which are often in hundreds of thousands of dollars. They are serious competition but at the same time promote human interaction and team work, not to mention the great entertainment. They are also opportunities for employment and economic activities. Each team will hire staff members and coaches. The professional players earn serious income from the live video streaming platforms even if they don’t win the prize money. In a sense everybody is a winner in the eco system spawned by the gaming industry.

As a long time gamer, I see my future in this eco system, perhaps as a game designer. To get started, I have to learn how to design a games. I have been learning computer programming. USC has one of the most respected game design program. I was extremely excited when I came across the Introduction to video game design course. I believe it would be a great stepping stone to my future career. With some luck, I believe I would find a place in the thriving industry and make my share of contributions.