Tell us what you'd like to major in at Cornell, and why or how your past academic or work experience influenced your decision, and how transferring to Cornell would further your academic interests. (Please limit your response to 650 words.)

Just graduated from high school, I started my first college life in Ohio Northern University where I was pursuing a degree as a Doctor of Pharmacy. After several semesters, my interest in health care and pharmacy was gradually diminishing, and I realized I had selected this major without deep searching as I was young and immature at the time. When I realized that the path was not for me, I transferred to the University of Pittsburgh (Pitt) undecided about a new major.

Because I had some natural science background and Pitt has a good reputation for biological science, I first intended to pursue biology. However, I was unsure of what I could do with a biology degree and was very skeptical about my interest in biology and other related fields. As I could not make a decision, my academic advisor suggested I take Intro to Computer Programming. I had my first programming experience in that class, and the new seed of my future academic interest and passion sprouted. Shortly after this transfer to Pitt, I had to return to my home country, South Korea in order to fulfill two years of mandatory military duty.

The time spent fulfilling military service became very significant to me as the experience “enlightened me”. I had wandered down an unclear path as I left pharmacy school and entered Pitt. I was completely lost in choosing a major, finding an academic interest and setting up my actual future plan. While patiently waiting until completion of my duty, I had plenty of time to carefully consider my future path. I realized that I must find and approach something that I could pour my passion into, but not wait aimlessly until a random future goal suddenly pops up in my head. Thus, I decided to pursue computer science. As a long time computer-enthusiast, game graphics, mobile apps and web development are appealing, but most significantly, new revolutionized technologies like big data, machine learning, and AI automation are becoming more integrated in every aspect of our world. Computer science enables me to acquire the foundation of knowledge and skill which is needed to approach these new ideas.

While at Pitt, I used my time and efforts wisely to learn and develop a solid foundation of basic programming concepts under an object-oriented programming early-focused curriculum. The curriculum gave me invaluable experiences, learning the basis of data structures, assembly languages and using Java to manage prospective real-world problems. My grasp of the fundamental knowledge and good academic standing prove that I can successfully move on to upper-level courses. While Pitt offers me many learning opportunities, I am looking towards further challenges and abundant resources offered at Cornell University.

The CS curriculum at Cornell University is very distinct as it requires technical electives and external specialization courses. To complete technical electives, I must choose three courses from various application areas such as economics, math, and natural sciences, and these courses must cover technical and quantitative methods. This requirement can be helpful to me as I can apply the knowledge base from learning economics and other subjects in depth to practical problems in the society. Also, external specialization allows me to take any three related courses which can be from various departments and fields that I am interested in. These high-level and interdisciplinary resources will definitely make me academically stronger.

Computer science is the door to the future. Computer science is a significantly influential way to approach new technologies such as big data and machine learning. I want to learn and adapt to this innovate trend of technologies. The Fourth Industrial Revolution, a technological transformation, is under construction for our future society, and computer scientists will play a large role in designing the change. Cornell’s prestigious CS curriculum is creating future technology revolution leaders. I want to grasp the opportunity Cornell has to offer and be a leader in the coming revolution.