

With the understanding that the choice of academic school you indicated is not binding, explain why you are applying to that particular school of study. (150 word limit)

Thanks to earning varsity-soccer captaincy during sophomore year, I have developed invaluable leadership skills. Rice Engineering provides a unique incubator for such involvement: Rice Center for Engineering Leadership. The certificate program will provide a rare opportunity to research STEM leadership specifically, and even receive structured internship experience within its classes (Professional Excellence for Engineers (241)).

Alternatively, my experiences on freecodecamp (an online coding community) have conditioned in me a team mentality for tackling challenges. Rice Engineering, through the exclusive OEDK, will transition my experiences in a chat-room to actual face-to-face problem solving. I relish harnessing the collaboration characteristic of the facility, learning new perspectives alongside all types of engineers thanks to OEDK's interdisciplinary theme.

I believe teamwork amidst impassioned students—although I do relish a leadership role—rivals the value of learning straight from revered professors. Rice's school of engineering, its culture embodying "teamwork and collaboration", will provide just that.

How did you first learn about Rice University, and what motivated you to apply? (250 word limit)

It was within the table of contents of Fiske Guide to Colleges that I first read "Rice University". In conjunction with top-ranked undergraduate engineering programs, Rice's name ignited my curiosity.

Before my college search, my intellectual inclinations were thankfully sorted. My Computer Science aspirations delve into Artificial Intelligence—specifically autonomous cars. The Century Scholars Program houses perfect resources to explore my aptitudes: freshman year, I will work with and learn from wise mentors. I can contact such professors as Lydia Kavraki and Anshumali Shrivastava, active researchers within Algorithms and Artificial Intelligence at Rice. Outside the lab, classes invigorate my learning affinities. The Computer Science core courses, in particular, of Algorithmic Thinking (182) and its sequel (382) will teach me the underpinnings of algorithmic thinking necessary to understand self-driving software early on.

I choose Rice for more than just my intellectual curiosity. On top of Rice's profoundly inclusive residential colleges, intramural sports beckon me. My four years of varsity high school soccer brimmed with excitement and competition, and Rice seems perfectly apt to reproduce that. Because of the deep-rooted ties and rivalries among houses, intramural soccer will provide an outlet to thrive in as a competitor. I value their meaningfulness: arguably more popular than varsity, intramurals provide a distinct goal—President's Cup, baby! Simultaneously, I hope to enrich my college experience through teammate bonds reminiscent of the ones I cultivated on my high school team. Here I can find camaraderie from the get-go.

Here I can develop connections, both communal and neural.

The quality of Rice's academic life and the Residential College System are heavily influenced by the unique life experiences and cultural traditions each student brings. What personal perspective would you contribute to life at Rice? (500 word limit)

Unlike most of my future peers in college, I've had a roommate since I was a zygote. Yes, we have our inevitable interior-decor disagreements, but we also squabble over the most inconsequential bedroom particularities. Despite this incessant bickering, and unlike the normal dormroom relationship, we can't switch roommates. I'm stuck with my twin.

During elementary school, I hewed an inseparable bond with Jordan. Whether within the school bus's confines or the playground's expanse, we stayed close. Teachers referred to us as "the Llorins", promoting the sameness we expressed in outfits—GAP jeans, soccer jerseys, scarlet JanSport backpacks—and overflowing bowl-cuts. Whether in art class crafts or playdate competitions, our intimacy conditioned us to work together, to bounce off ideas, to criticize and advise.

As the years ambled on, our inseparableness became less feasible. Class schedules diversified, forcing us to expand social boundaries and tolerate occasional independence. Puberty arrived, and we adapted accordingly to win over pretty girls who otherwise couldn't tell us apart. Subsequently, our friends began to observe individualities ranging from the timbre of our laughs to the style of our outfits—my color coordination trumped Jordan's, of course.

Jordan, once my collaborator, became my rival. While we still cooperated over inconsequential Pre-Calculus homework, we competed for minutes on the varsity soccer team and class rank on a

transcript. Just as hostile as student-athlete life was the social scene. I cringed everytime Jordan's witticisms prompted laughter in Engineering, the one class we shared Junior year. I scowled when classmates lauded his uninhibited nature, one contrasting with my serious demeanor. Comparisons deprived my ego and fed my resentment.

As my distress peaked, I gradually realized the fallaciousness of my misgivings. Who said that my personality or my GPA had to best Jordan's? I realized the bitter envy plaguing my own self-image; I yearned to be content. Alongside my peers, I forced myself to chuckle at his sprightly humour rather than shake my head in shame. Instead of undercutting his achievements with "that's it?", I offered congratulations for his ACT score and even—ironically—a "Happy Birthday" in late January.

Today, I appreciate Jordan more than ever. From offering morning rides to Paul, an eccentric introvert, to chirping "Good luck Field Hockey!" to players walking by, he teaches me the importance of compassion. His sparkling reputation speaks to doors held open, self-deprecating jokes, and a bona fide smile. From Jordan I've learned the benefits of connection and synergy; I've realized that appreciation is much more healthy than resentment. Lastly, I've learned that I want to emulate him. College will embody much more than sifting through textbooks in my lonesome, for I will take most meaning from the relationships I make and then strengthen. I will bring to Rice a mindset not only of tolerance, but also of an enthusiasm to meet and greet, to work with and grow with others—regardless of social skillset, economic status, ethnic background. Of course, I will miss Jordan's company, but I really can't wait to meet my next roommate!