

November 2011

Dear Mr. and Mrs. MacDonald

I hope this letter finds you well. I am writing to thank you for the John R. MacDonald Memorial Fellowship Fund. While recently my family started doing better financially, I recall having to make a decision on whether I could still come to Stanford should I not receive any financial aid. I remember crying the morning when I got the email stating that I was admitted to Stanford with a scholarship funding me. It was a moment that I don't think I will ever forget.

Growing up I was an engineer by education and an entrepreneur by experience. Engineering wise, I have been a physics tutor/teaching assistant since I was in fifth grade and have been building my own toys since ... as young as I could remember. Entrepreneur wise, both my parents started their own ventures when they were around fourteen and I followed the family culture and started my own education center (a profitable business) when I was around sixteen. Going to Georgia Tech affirmed my passion in Tech, and thus I applied to the Stanford PhD program in Mechanical Engineering. In my undergraduate years I received awards on researches and invented steering mechanisms for Unmanned Air Vehicles. Those achievements suggested that I should probably pursue an academic path.

However, coming to Stanford (which you enabled) has taught me to look at the world with a different light. Taking courses like ME310 (*Project Based Engineering Product Development*) taught me how to solve problems outside of engineering context, and connected my engineering problem solving skills to solve real meaningful problems that touch lives. Taking classes in other departments also allowed me to learn so much more on how I can build not only products (engineering), but organizations, visions and innovations that propel the human civilization forward. Since early this year I started to be involved in Stanford start up communities, learning, teaching and mentoring younger entrepreneurs who have the dream of turning this world into a better place.

I measure my ROI in terms of lives touched. I'm sure you do, too. I'm not someone who knows how to use words to describe my feelings, but in simplest terms, you have broadened my view of this world, you have allowed me to have an unmatched education, and you have allowed me to learn from the top individuals in this world. You have allowed me to build my dreams.

You played a key role in allowing me to be where I am today. Thank you.

Regards,



Quinn Lai