

Dear Mr. and Mrs. MacDonald,

Thank you so much for supporting my graduate education at Stanford through the Daniel W. MacDonald Memorial Fellowship. I'm a second-year graduate student in mechanical engineering, and I'm finishing up my masters and preparing to continue for a PhD. Receiving a fellowship was crucial for my decision to come to Stanford, and I'm grateful for the opportunity to attend such a great university in such a thriving area of the country.

My first year at Stanford was very challenging and very instructive. I took courses in mathematics, dynamics, and mechatronics, and I audited classes in computer science. I was impressed at the quality of teaching that I experienced, and I was also grateful for the opportunity to get to know my professors better than ever before. Additionally, I'm very proud of the class projects that I got to do for my mechatronics class, where I worked on a team of four students over the course of the school year to design and build an electromechanical arcade game, an autonomous wheeled robot, and a remote controlled hovercraft.

On top of learning a ton in my classes, I also grew quite a bit as a researcher during my first year at Stanford. I had the opportunity to "rotate" in three different robotics laboratories, completing a small project in each one to get a feel for the type of work and the people in each laboratory. At the start of the summer, I chose my favorite of the three laboratories in which to complete a full-time summer research project. My project studied ways that a robot could help speed up surgeon learning for robot-assisted surgery. I loved my advisor from the summer, Professor Allison Okamura, because she was very organized and had both a deep technical understanding of the research I was working on and an amazing sense of exactly what I needed at any time. I also enjoyed the work, as I got to program a state-of-the-art da Vinci surgical robot, and I got to collaborate with surgeons and engineers around the world who are experts in robot-assisted surgical training. Additionally, I appreciated the opportunity to spend time with my fellow students in the laboratory, as we ate lunch together every day and played a quick game of basketball afterwards. I'm very proud of the fact that, at the end of the summer, I submitted my first research paper to a conference, the International Conference on Robotics and Automation, which will be held in Singapore in May 2017. I plan to continue work on this project for my PhD.

This year, I'm a teaching assistant for the first time, for the course *Vibrations and Control of Dynamical Systems*, which is taken by juniors, seniors, and some graduate students in mechanical engineering. I absolutely love the professor for this class, as he is very good at engaging his students and making the lecture interactive. I've been enjoying holding office hours and leading a laboratory session for the class, and I have learned so much about both the course material and about thinking on my feet from answering student questions. I even got to teach part of the lecture one day, which gave me great confidence in my public speaking ability.

Outside of class, I'm so blessed to be able to be a part of the Stanford Women's Ultimate Frisbee A Team, also known as Stanford Superfly. The team is very competitive, having won the national college championship last year, and it is also very positive and focused on perpetual improvement. I'm also part of the Stanford Catholic Community, which provides a supportive and like-minded friend group. Additionally, I sing as a member of the Stanford University Singers. There is so much to learn and get involved in at Stanford, and I'm looking forward to spending several more years here. Thanks again for making this incredible experience possible for me!

Sincerely,

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