

Dear Mr. and Mrs. MacDonald,

This is Varun Vasudevan, a first-year PhD student in the Institute for Computational and Mathematical Engineering (ICME) at Stanford. I am a recipient of the Robert F. MacDonald Fellowship. I am writing to express my gratitude for your generosity that allows me to be a PhD student in the interdisciplinary computational community at Stanford. I chose ICME as I want to construct my career around computational mathematics with a focus on both research and teaching.

For the first year, my goal is to focus on coursework to lay a strong foundation and clear the PhD qualifying exams. It wouldn't have been possible to focus on coursework without worrying about funding if I were not supported through the Robert F. MacDonald Fellowship. My research interests are in the areas of numerical optimization and matrix computations. Stanford has renowned faculty in these areas of research. Through coursework and seminars, I'm able to interact with and know these faculty on a one-on-one basis. I believe this is a good start to finding a research adviser.

Discussions with my fellow PhD students have thus far been my favorite experience. We are a group of 14 students from very different undergrad backgrounds—electrical, mechanical, chemical, computer science, applied physics, computational biology, pure mathematics and so on. I feel very lucky to be in such a diverse cohort of hardworking and helpful students.

As I end this letter, I promise to continue to work hard and give back to educational institutions when I start working full-time.

Thank you so very much. I'm sincerely grateful for your ongoing support and generosity.

Respectfully,



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