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Type: Motivation letter

Degree: Masters

Major: Civil Engineering

University: Columbia University

It's an unarguable fact that children like to have fun. The means of doing so, however, vary. My amusement entailed going to the engineering plant where my grandfather worked — it was fascinating to watch how an idea made its way from a blueprint to a final product. Observing these remarkable metamorphoses encouraged me to follow in my grandfather's footsteps. A trip to Dubai further cemented my decision to choose engineering as a career goal. Seeing the Burj Khalifa, the world's tallest free-standing structure, brought to light the very human capacity to create embodiments of grandiosity. I found that if others could contribute to the development of modern infrastructure, I surely could as well.

This dream served as an impetus to work hard throughout my endeavors. By all means, I made it from a small town in Russia to Fairleigh Dickinson University, where I am currently working towards a degree in Civil Engineering Technology and playing Division 1 Tennis on a full scholarship. Playing for a team was an entirely new experience — I learned that working with others entails recognizing the best qualities of each player and applying them towards the common goal. Soon enough, I gained respect from my teammates and was chosen as the team captain. Provided with a valuable lesson in collaboration, I realized how crucial it is to be a team player as an aspiring engineer — building the next Burj Khalifa would, undoubtedly, require a strong voice and significant contribution.

Being an athlete has shaped my personality, primarily through the virtues of sacrifice and determination. My childhood was pervaded by tennis — I sacrificed many fun activities, trips, and parties to follow my strict athletic schedule. Seeing where it brought me, I have never regretted my priorities. I further attribute athleticism to my determination in overcoming the language barrier and cultural adaptation of moving to the US. I assimilated the way people communicate with one another, allowing me not only to express myself in English, but to build new connections and make friends. Ultimately, I learned that the only way to achieve the impossible is to believe that it is possible.

My goal of becoming a civil engineer became clear when I started an internship for the Kim Grant Academy. This was a unique experience for me to truly understand the responsibilities and work environment of civil engineers. Working on a tennis club renovation project, my job was to help build dorms for the players. As an insider of the tennis world, I was thrilled to apply my experience to an engineering perspective, and was able to provide sound advice on various aspects of the project. I performed surveying measurements, drafted AutoCAD drawings, and worked on estimation documents, which helped me bridge the gap between the theoretical knowledge learned in school and their practical applications.

While my undergraduate coursework taught me the fundamental concepts required to pursue structural design, I would like to continue my discovery of new materials and tools in order to achieve my ambition of “reaching the sky.” I was excited to discover that the trademark of the Structural Engineering program at Columbia University is the openness to new technology and practices, which will provide me with a rare opportunity to sharpen my professional development and teach me the specifics of structural engineering. The program’s particular focus on the environment is ever-important to me — it is an undoubtable fact that the effects of climate change call for a shift in our ways of building structures, and thus I am interested in researching green building and sustainable systems in terms of design, land planning, and material selection. Having the potential to tailor my studies to fit these interests is thrilling, and CIEN E4100y Earthquake and Wind Engineering, CIEN E4111x Uncertainty and Risk in Infrastructure Systems, CIEN E4234y Design of Large-Scale Buildings, and CIEN E4235x Multihazard Design of Structures are among the classes I intend on taking.

Moreover, having studied near New York City for the past four years, I realized that this is the ideal place for my dreams to come true. Both the city and university alike open many doors for opportunity, allowing me to build new connections and develop professionally. After seeing some of the biggest cities in the world, I have a drive that cannot be stopped.

My devotion to the prospect of innovation has helped me achieve a GPA of 3.97, multiple FDU Honors Lists, and various other academic and athletic recognitions, and thus I am confident that I will contribute to the pride of your university.