

How does the University of Chicago, as you know it now, satisfy your desire for a particular kind of learning, community, and future? Please address with some specificity your own wishes and how they relate to UChicago.

UChicago embodies everything my high school education so lacked. From a deep commitment to critical thought, to an interdisciplinary study focused on challenging accepted conventions, studying at UChicago will serve to satisfy an avid interest in ideas, and their power. It is my opinion that a good education should not teach you the correct answers to some questions; but rather, it should equip you with the framework to be able to ask yourself the correct questions about anything, giving you the ability to reason critically. The core curriculum does this in a uniquely effective way. The growth of the Internet, which has prompted the most profound change on the information dynamic since the printer, makes such a focus especially important since knowing is enough. Information about anything and everything is now accessible at the touch of a finger. An education, I believe, should be about preparing students for a life of digesting, criticizing and conceptualizing – not answering.

UChicago does not waver in its commitment to thought. It does not cower to popular opinion, does not allow for a collapse into intellectual solipsism, it breeds leaders of a world that is prone to change. It prepares students for a future where uncertainty is the only certainty.

Columbia:

Please tell us what you found meaningful about one of the above mentioned books, publications or cultural events.

When I landed in South Africa for my summer holiday this year, I picked up a newspaper I found myself oddly engrossed by the news of the day; the country was in uproar. Uproar not at rampant nepotism, social inequality and abuses of power but instead, anger at a painting. Granted, this painting was not conventional – it depicted the President bearing his genitalia in a Lenin-esque pose, as part of an exhibition of South African satirical pop art by South African artist Brett Murray.

The painting should have inspired a public discussion on President Zuma's womanizing past – he has been tried for rape, has dozens of children with several wives and dozens more out of wedlock. It was meant to stir discourse on whether aged traditions are compatible with modern conceptions of rights. Yet politicians were quick to jump on their soapboxes and deride the painting as racist, the public was quick to take to the streets and eventually destroy the painting, and indeed much of the media coverage centered on the whys of the painter – instead of the whys of the painting. I found the painting meaningful because it exemplified, to me at least, everything that is wrong with contemporary South African society. It showed how social discourse can centre on the wrong issues; how it can resist complexity where complexity should be championed.

UC:

Describe the world you come from – for example, your family, community or school – and tell us how your world has shaped your dreams and aspirations.

Spending my childhood in post apartheid South Africa and then moving to Dubai at the age of 15 the “melting pot” has been a ubiquitous part of my life.

There is no “South African experience” as such. Each person's life can be entirely unique and their personal journey will always be distinctive. Mine was, in many ways, sheltered and adverse to change. I knew that I somehow was part of the Mandela led equality renaissance, and that I might have had my place in the future in some way – but I didn't know what it was and where I was going. I went to one school, associated with friends I knew since we were infants and the central locus of my life hardly changed for a long time. Then my world got turned upside down.

Moving across the world with my family to a place unknown and to experiences foreign pushed me beyond my depths and challenged me to “fit in”. Upon entering my new classroom I found myself amongst classmates from 70 different countries, who looked different, spoke differently and had stories that were, in themselves, alien to me. Though my school bombarded us with meaningless mantras about “World Citizenship” and “Universal

Values” I found that in the ocean of difference nothing was more important than finding myself.

What do I want to be? I don't know. But I have a good idea of what I need to be. I know that in order to be a meaningful part of an ever-changing society I need to be open minded. I know that I cannot resign myself to what I know, because what I know can and almost certainly will change. I know that I cannot let others determine who I am or what I do but that what I do can impact others and that I should always take this into account.

Penn:

A Penn education provides a liberal arts and sciences foundation across multiple disciplines with a practical emphasis in one of four undergraduate schools: the College of Arts and Sciences, the School of Engineering and Applied Science, the School of Nursing, or the Wharton School.

Given the undergraduate school to which you are applying, please discuss how you will engage academically at Penn. (Please answer in 300 words or less.)

The study of PPE, a comprehensive degree that appreciates the complexity of problems, coupled with Academically Based Community Service Courses, will let me use theoretical knowledge to make improvements in the human condition. The Capstone Seminar makes the Penn PPE experience distinctive by holding thinking up to the highest epistemic standard and driving peer-to-peer inquiry. Additionally, I see Benjamin Franklin Scholars Seminars as a great opportunity, given that they use dialogue as a means of stimulating a deep understanding on a sharply focused examination of ideas. For instance, I am intrigued by Professor Kors' seminar on the History of Classical Liberal Thought; what is great about a Penn education is that I would be able to fulfill this interest even though it may be beyond the purview of my degree programme.

By imbuing essential quantitative skills The Rigorous Reasoning pre-requirement will enhance my ability to understand public policy solutions in the context of their real-world impact, and further will allow me to harness the phenomenal undergraduate research opportunities available. Combined with the specific concentration requirement of majoring in PPE, the CURF

will let me be on forefront of groundbreaking research in the social sciences. Of particular interest to me is the possibility of using evidence-based analysis to improve the impact of development aid in Africa through political reform; an endeavor where the intellectual and human resources of the Fels School of Government would be invaluable.

I think an education is as much about building internal ability as it is about understanding other minds and other ways of thinking. The community of thinkers at Penn is an ideal place to engage with thoughts presented by a diverse student body – enlivening a curiosity to broaden my own intellectual and academic horizons.

UChicago: TV show: *The Simpsons* has somehow made the mundane aspects of life thoroughly interesting, arguably becoming the most apt social commentary of our generation. Depicting the ever-present imperfections of ordinary life and social context, some more minor and monotonous in their nature and others more meaningful, it has managed to capture some part of everyone's life an astutely crude way. Exploring concepts from social class and the pitfalls of political ignorance, to laziness and teenage rebellion has allowed the show to remain popular for over 20 years, and make it impenetrable to changes in our collective outlook or in our social structure. *The Simpsons* is the place to find quirky satire, one-line quips that are as witty as they are befitting and episodes brimming with imaginative, daring plots. I hope a UChicago education will make me, as Homer (Simpson, not Homer of Iliad) says "a stupid know-nothing know it all".