



Dear PBKACA,

Coming from a community where education is not placed on a high pedestal, I initially found it difficult to commit to my academics. Fortunately, I have always possessed an inherent drive to learn, to retrieve knowledge. That innate motivation has allowed me to graduate at the top of my class at Foreman High School and has led me to where I will be attending this fall: Columbia University in the City of New York.

When I reflect on my past four years of high school, I come to realize how strenuous it was to plan for my future. I did not know where I wanted to go or who I wanted to become. Although my family members made it obvious that they cared about my future, it was difficult for them to understand my situation in the academic sense. Therefore, I felt alone. That was when I decided to join a plethora of extracurricular activities, ranging from the Academic Decathlon to volunteering at my neighborhood hospital. Exploring various activities and academic disciplines allowed me to discover myself in both the academic and career-related aspects. Now, I am committed to majoring in Financial Economics.

Receiving this scholarship, though, has allowed me to realize that I am not alone. There are organizations like Phi Beta Kappa that truly care for the academic success of students. Because of this prestigious scholarship, I will be able to eliminate a huge financial burden and focus 100-percent on my academics at Columbia. While attending the institution, I will be able to gain a great education not only in business but also in the liberal arts. Reading classic literature, studying art and music, taking core science courses, and gaining a good understanding of the business world will allow me to understand my surroundings in a completely new perspective. With such education, I will be able to connect with individuals from various academic backgrounds.

Once again, it is truly an honor to receive this award. It will allow me to focus on my academics and engross myself into the Columbia community, giving me the opportunity to explore my passions in greater depth. I could not be more excited for the imminent events I am set to experience.

With sincere gratitude,

Juan Castrejon

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