

Describe two or three of your current intellectual interests and why they are exciting to you. Why will Cornell's College of Arts and Sciences be the right environment in which to pursue your interests?

FIRST DRAFT

There are two activities that I value most: learning, and applying that knowledge. To me, there is little more enjoyable than reading a biography about a scientist, or the history of a city. And even more, it is a necessity: without knowing about how past innovators have acted, how do we know how to act in the future?

Frank Oppenheimer worked on the Manhattan Project, and was most famously brother of Robert Oppenheimer, president of the project. Frank Oppenheimer was an extremely prominent scientist, but during the Mearthy Era, he was blacklisted as a communist and disrespected completely by the academic community. K. C. Cole documents Oppenheimer's fascinating past, but she most interestingly delves into his unique perspective on science and art. The book inspired me to reconsider the value of pursuing knowledge for its own sake, and how this act is similar to creating art. It is provocative in its notion of how science should be embraced; what makes us enthusiastic about it or distant from it?

Similarly, I read Nikola Tesla and Richard Feinman's respective autobiographies, extremely innovative and creative scientists who offer starkly different views and who had starkly different personalities. Tesla was a chronically anxious person whose extreme discomfort in society and his seemingly insane ideas lead to the prominence of alternating current electricity in our time. Feinman, conversely, was an extremely playful and light character, whose endless curiosity led him to a Nobel Prize in Physics and numerous successes in the world. Again most interestingly, though were their views of science's place in the world.

At Cornell's College of Arts and Sciences, I believe that I would be able to continue to think about and learn about science's place in the world. I would have the opportunity to work with scientists about areas of interest like renewable energy, like Tomas Arias. I would also have the opportunity to take humanities classes and learn more about what people think. The combination of an environment where I could take classes in a multidisciplinary environment, but also engage in research hands on is where I would thrive best. I can focus on physics and Cornell is large enough that I can take more philosophical classes in other departments. in the College of Arts and sciences, I will have the opportunity to engage with people in the Science of Earth system around renewable energy ideas, and I will have the opportunity to take humanities classes.

FINAL DRAFT

Great innovators recognize how different subjects relate to each other. When I read for pleasure, I choose books that focus on different cross-disciplinary connections that

interest me. For the same reason, Cornell's College of Arts and Sciences is attractive because it would allow me to continue to examine the intersections among fields and develop a multidimensional approach to solving scientific problems.

The biography, *Something Incredibly Wonderful Happens* by K. C. Cole, not only explores Frank Oppenheimer's life, but also his interesting views on how people should interact with science. The book made me consider why people often see science as drab with mere utilitarian potential; why aren't scientific phenomena perceived as intrinsically beautiful? This question prompted me to wonder about how art is perceived through the lens of technology. How has the modern age changed the way in which we relate to art, science, and beauty?

Classes like "Race, Technology, and Visuality" would give me the opportunity to deepen my exploration of these intriguing questions. I would have the flexibility, even as a possible physics major, to take art history classes and to explore the relationship between science and art. Cornell also has a renowned art museum, and I would have convenient and free access to a space that would encourage my thinking about the relationship between art and science.

The distribution of electricity is a topic that fascinates me. I recently read Phillip F. Shewe's *The Grid: A Journey Through the Heart of Our Electrified World* because I wanted to know more about how my home and school receive electricity. *The Grid* expanded my understanding of how generating and distributing electricity locally and nationally affect the environment.

Attending Cornell excites me because I would have the opportunity to understand the grid's effect on the world. I would be able to take classes in the Science of Earth Systems department to understand how atmospheric dynamics may relate to energy usage. Finally, I appreciate that Cornell sets forth clear initiatives regarding energy, such as the Cornell University Renewable Bio-Energy Initiative. It is critical to me that I attend a college committed to addressing environmental issues.

Having the opportunity to move beyond the classroom and to participate in research is also a priority for me. To pursue my questions about the environment and mitigating pollution, I would reach out to professors involved in the field of renewable energy. For example, I am interested in Tomas Arias's research and how it applies to solar cell systems. As a member of the Atkinson Center for a Sustainable Future, he is one of the Cornell faculty members under the College of Arts and Sciences with whom I would love to work.

The College of Arts and Sciences offers a nurturing environment, opportunities and resources that are pertinent to my scientific interests, and the flexibility to explore science in the context of other fields. These reasons have convinced me that it is the ideal school in which to pursue my academic ambitions.