

BEFORE

PROMPT: Please discuss why you consider Duke a good match for you. Is there something in particular at Duke that attracts you?

I've always dreamed of going to Duke, but it's only recently that I've come to focus on pursuing a public policy major through the Sanford School of Public Policy. I hadn't been aware of the Sanford School until I stumbled upon it as I was researching internship opportunities. As I was perusing the website, a blurb by one Sanford undergraduate caught my eye. He or she wrote: "In Public Policy 114, Professor Bruce Jentleson drills into his students the idea that policymakers are not just politicians". This philosophy resonated with my own understanding of policy in today's world: as a means of analyzing the way policies impact people, not just how government runs. The education Sanford offers - interdisciplinary but focused, practical yet liberal-arts-based- would prepare me for a world in which the boundaries separating government, business and culture are dissolving.

One important aspect of the undergraduate public policy curriculum is the emphasis on interdisciplinary learning. Unlike traditional political science classes, the public policy curriculum includes economics, statistics and history: in short, a well-rounded set of analytical tools. Furthermore, I can continue to pursue my interest in international comparative studies within Trinity College's outstanding, respective departments. The Sanford School is also one of the only schools to include ethics as an integral part of its curriculum, and this speaks to my belief that integrity should play a larger role in policy-making than it currently does.

Duke's reputation as a premier undergraduate research university is evident in the research opportunities it offers in its public policy major. The Sanford School emphasizes the importance of undergraduate research by encouraging honors thesis, independent study, or work as a research opportunity. I am particularly drawn to the Duke Program on History, Public Policy and Social Change, especially its study of non-violent revolutions. This program reminds me of the independent study I completed in my senior year of high school, which culminated in a research paper on the history of conservation policy in the US, in that it combines my interests in history, policy and current affairs perfectly. I really admire the way this program tackles controversial social issues and promotes historical perspective in policymaking.

AFTER

The moment I read a student's comment on the Sanford School of Public Policy's website, I knew I wanted to take Professor Jentleson's class, which confirmed my decision to transfer to Duke to pursue a major in public policy. "In Public Policy 114," the student wrote, "Professor Bruce Jentleson drills into his students the idea that policymakers are not just politicians." This philosophy resonates with my understanding of policy-making—a means to analyze policies' impact upon citizens, as opposed to merely providing an explanation of how our government functions. In addition, I believe that in combination with Sanford's interdisciplinary, but focused curriculum, a pragmatic yet liberal-arts-based-education will prepare me for a world marked by the dissolution of boundaries separating government, business, and culture.

Unlike other courses of study for political science majors, Sanford's public policy curriculum includes classes in economics, statistics, and history to provide students with a valuable set of analytical tools. Further, not only can I continue to pursue my interest in international comparative studies within Trinity College's departments, but the inclusion of ethics as an integral part of the curriculum also speaks to my belief that integrity needs to play a significantly larger role in policy-making.

The research opportunities offered to public policy majors adds to Duke's reputation as a premier undergraduate research university. In encouraging honors theses and independent study, or employment as a research opportunity, the Sanford School emphasizes the importance of undergraduate research. In particular, a chance to focus on the study of non-violent revolutions most attracts me.

During the second semester of my senior year, I completed an independent study project that culminated in a research paper on the history of conservation policy in the United States. In conducting my research, I combined my interest in history, policy, and current affairs. The manner in which Sanford's program tackles controversial social issues, while also attending to policy-making's history further entices me, and I look forward to completing an internship offered as part of the public policy curriculum. From personal experiences participating in two high school internships, one at Weir Farm National Park, an organization that commemorates American Impressionism, and another

Another aspect of the public policy curriculum that I admire is its emphasis on completing an internship. If there's one thing I've learned from my work experiences at Weir Farm National Park and One Economy, it is that nothing rivals an education combined with practical experience. Sanford's Career Services department seems to be extremely helpful with applying for competitive internships: for example, with the State Department, the United Nations or a think tank such as the Brookings Institute.

In addition to a well-rounded, intensive curriculum, Sanford also has a number of programs that I would be interested in pursuing. The study abroad program at the University of Glasgow, which combines studying abroad with the opportunity to study British public policy in depth, also seems like an amazing experience.

Outside the classroom, I look forward to becoming involved in the Duke Model United Nations club. One of the best parts of leading my high school Model United Nations club was mentoring younger students as they learned the diplomatic and analytical skills needed to compete. Participating in the annual Duke Model United Nations Conference, which prides itself on its small committees and well-trained dias, would give me the opportunity to continue introducing high school students to the fast-paced, increasingly relevant world of international relations.

In addition to these quantifiable characteristics, there's an additional something about Duke that transcends the usual adjectives: 'top-ranked', 'academically competitive', or even its unofficial motto, 'work hard, play hard'. I have felt it when I was on campus, I have felt it when reading Duke's websites and publications, and I have felt it when talking to Duke students and alumni. Maybe it's just the natural product of having such a high concentration of intelligent, diverse and ambitious people in one place; whatever the cause, this is the kind of community I want to be a part of.

at One Economy which works to bring technology to underserved communities, I learned the value of education accompanied by practical experience. Further, the assistance Sanford's Career Services department provides to students applying for competitive internships; for example, with the State Department, the United Nations, or the Brookings Institute convinces me such opportunities are within reach.

While thriving in an intensive academic course of study, I also hope to participate in the study-abroad program at the University of Glasgow, which provides students with an opportunity for in-depth study of British public policy. Outside the classroom, I hope to become involved in Duke's Model United Nations. As the leader of my high school's Model United Nations club, I found mentoring younger students while they learned the diplomatic and analytical skills needed to compete the best part of my experience. In addition, at Cornell University's 2010 Model United Nations Conference, I won Best Delegate, so I definitely want to participate in Duke's annual Model United Nations Conference. Duke's small committees and well-trained dias, would allow me to continue introducing high school students to the fast-paced, increasingly relevant world of international relations.

In addition to the above quantifiable characteristics, an additional something about Duke transcends the usual descriptors: "top-ranked," "academically competitive," or even its unofficial motto, "Work hard; play hard." I felt it when I visited campus, and I feel it when I read Duke's websites and publications or speak with Duke undergraduates and alumni. Perhaps that something is only the natural product of such a high concentration of intelligent, diverse, and ambitious people in one setting. Whatever its origin, I know I want to become a member of that community.