

Chelsea Wang

MIT Sloan - MBA Class of 2019
Optional Essay



A little bit of my background

- I attended elementary school in China until third grade and immigrated to Toronto with my family during the skilled workers immigration push.
- Dad left his job as chairman of a state-owned architecture firm and Mom as a microbiology professor in a respected university, all in hopes of giving their daughter a brighter future.
- However, I struggled in Canada. Ethnic slurs and insults, which though I did not speak much English I managed to understand, made me painfully aware that I was different. I started to wonder when I ever would be assimilated. On my 11th birthday, my only wish was to wake up the next morning and speak perfect English.
- Mom and Dad struggled as well. Dad started working as a gas station cashier and Mom as a manufacturing plant worker to financially support the family while anxiously searching for more appropriate careers. They both lost substantial pride during the first few years we spent in Canada, so far removed from the life they vigilantly had crafted back home.
- Seeing their tired silhouettes coming home from work every evening, I quickly realized that I needed to hoist myself out of this situation.



How I overcame the obstacles

— Reading:

- For two years after landing in Toronto, I made regular visits to the community library in which I indulged in all kinds of books to learn English

— Mathematics: I was linguistically incomprehensible to everyone else, but math is universal.

- Achieved perfect or near perfect scores in all math related courses in high school;
- Top percentile in University of Waterloo mathematics contest for each year throughout middle and high school;
- Achievements in mathematics were a well-timed vote of confidence and allowed me to work twice as hard in other subjects while catching up on English.

— Arts:

- I was tremendously interested in all art forms and they served as methods of emotional expression at a time when I didn't speak English fluently to connect with others.
 - Piano: achieved level 10 with First Class honour at Royal Conservatory of Music in Canada;
 - Violin: achieved level 8 with First Class honour at Royal Conservatory of Music in Canada;
 - Ballet: soloist in the National Ballet School of Canada production of Nutcracker and Firebird;
 - Visual art: crafted extensive portfolio of oil paintings in which one was sold at an art show.
- Working to be better at an instrument, a dance form or a piece of art taught me patience, delayed gratification, and hard work. I have applied the same attitude towards any difficulties I encountered in my personal and professional life.

Samples of my extracurricular interests



Who I am today

Leader

- Founded my university's first ever case-based competition and expanded into multi-day business conference with >300 participants
- Developed and taught Excel workshops to more than 80 associates each year during annual training

Mentor

- Assigned as career mentor to two senior associates, even with other more tenured colleagues available, as I am recognized as talented at mentoring others
- Maintained strong ties with my university and high school to provide career guidance; served as competition judge / closing ceremony speaker / alumni event representative for various occasions.

Educator

- Worked extensively with children with developmental challenges in Toronto by teaching and organizing dance workshops, so they can explore movement as method of expression and communication
- Currently a Junior Board member at the LSA organization in New York, serving underprivileged children from immigrant families.

Top performer

- Awarded spotlight award by national lead partner at PwC for significant contribution to establishing client relationships.
- Awarded two Encore Awards at Standing Ovation level at KPMG in 10 months of employment for outstanding performance in deal related work and business development initiatives.

Intellectually curious

- Took more than required courses in both high school and university to take advantage of the resources available to learn as much as I can
- Crafted an particularly diverse client portfolio in 5 years of working in financial services to learn as much as I can about different industries:
 - Real estate, asset management, construction, retail, insurance, fintech, manufacturing etc.

Academic performance

Undergraduate academic performance...

- Heavily involving myself in extracurricular activities with leadership positions, I founded the school's first ever case-based competition, spear-headed the York Investment Club and organized socials for our class of 300 students, all while working more than 20 hours each week.
- The Canadian economy was lukewarm post 2008 financial crisis and I was invited to numerous recruiting activities, such as leadership conferences and coffee chats that mostly took place during lecture hours (class participation made up of 30% of final grade in most courses).
- The combined classes and events for MBA and BBA students, led to the business school culture with emphasis on networking, collaboration, and recruiting, while less importance was placed on academic achievement.
- Efforts put forth during recruiting allowed me to land one of eight full time offers from PwC Toronto and leadership experiences taught me many valuable lessons in teamwork, perseverance, and business intelligence. However, I learned a lesson on the importance of balance – my GPA suffered to B+.

Potential to succeed in an academic setting...

I would like to ask the admission committee to consider the following in combination, as it is a better indication of my potential to succeed in an academic setting:

- Admitted to the most competitive undergraduate business program in Canada with a cumulative GPA of 93.2%,
- GMAT score of 760 (Q51 V42),
- First decile ranking in all three Chartered Accountancy case-based examinations, all passed on first attempt,
- Completion of CFA level I examination,
- Analytical nature of my current job performing complex data analysis for mergers and acquisition transactions in the banking, asset management, financial technology and insurance sector.

Thank you for your consideration.

Ever since I was three years old, my answer to the “what do you want to be when you grow up?” question, was always “**I want to go to MIT and become the best engineer like mom and dad**”.

The goal hasn't changed – **MIT**, and to be a helping hand in the financial technology industry at the forefront of the digital revolution that will shrink the role and relevance of traditional banks, while also working to create better, faster and cheaper services for consumers.

