

Admission Essay

I began my career as a scientist, but I am now director of a corporation I founded and developed. In 1982, I started planning a national gene bank of the rarest American plant types. Time called the organization I started and now direct “an unprecedented program, by far the most comprehensive to date.” Science, The New York Times, Washington Post, and Associated Press Network, among others, have all featured major stories about it.

It is far more satisfying than the technical work I did previously, and convinces me that my career will continue in business administration. I do not see myself an excellent manager; I often improve when I should be able to rely on practice skills and an informed sense of perspective. I need formal training to sharpen the entrepreneurial and managerial skills I have developed.

I particularly want to attend your school because of its unsurpassed reputation for training general business managers able to function in environments that demand scientific and quantitative abilities. The integration of business training with my knowledge of the basic science would give me powerful skills for work in the high technology industries. Biotechnology, in particular, is only now becoming an actual economic activity. I am convinced that there are many unrealized opportunities to develop simple, extremely useful applications of existing biotechnologies, such as screening plants used in nonwestern medicine for active pharmaceuticals. No U.S. drug company is now investigating such plants, although a quarter of all present prescription drugs is plant derivatives. Nonetheless, I view my past training as a possible asset to my career, not a constraint; I would expect study at your school to broaden my perspective on possible careers, as well as providing substantive information.

My commitment to a career in management had developed slowly. When I was an undergraduate, I was the student founder and resident director of Shaw House, the “residential college” for the Boston College Honor’s program. I organized a program intended to be an intellectual and cultural focus for the House, the Program as a whole, and the entire residential campus. Later, while I was in graduate school, I was one of two leaders of research expeditions with about twenty participants. These trips have taken me to uninhabited islands and coastal jungles in the Caribbean, Central America, and Africa. Leading the teams demonstrated to me that I could build a productive, task-oriented group. However, at the time, I saw both of these activities as secondary to my studies in basic biology and resource management.

Within a few years after graduate school, I began planning the Center for Plant Conservation, now the national gene bank for rare American plant types. I designed the Center as a nonprofit corporation, but one focused on measurable accomplishment, it is rapidly building a permanent genetic reserve of over 3,000 plant types, almost all of which were previously inaccessible and likely to be lost entirely.

Building the Center has refined all my necessary abilities, strengthening some and tempering others. More than any other experience, it has helped me develop both the external skills and internal qualities of leadership, and there is little of my experience not required of me as a leader of a rapidly growing organization.

While I was still in school, I saw my organization roles as secondary to my scientific training. I am now convinced that my technical education is background for a career in management.



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