



March 24, 2021

Dear Mr. and Mrs. Schulze,

Although 2020 was a year of struggle for many (myself included), there were still many things to be thankful for. I've done my best to maintain a positive outlook through these troubling times, and your generosity has been extremely helpful in doing so. I

wouldn't be where I am today without the help you've been kind enough to provide me and my family, and for that, I will always be thankful!

Before the pandemic hit, I had several amazing opportunities. With MIT's help, I had the opportunity to attend the Naval Academy's Leadership Conference. I got to listen to amazing speakers ranging from one of the first women astronauts, the current director of the FBI, and several others talk about their experiences with leadership and the spectrum of ways that one can demonstrate it. It was a truly inspiring event! The spring semester also started before the pandemic. I enrolled in a communications class, a design and manufacturing class in which I was supposed to build a robot, a materials and structures class, as well as a course on leadership in engineering. Unfortunately, the pandemic struck in the middle of the semester, so I was forced to finish these courses from home. Working from home was definitely challenging, but it actually helped me to focus. With less extracurriculars to focus on, I could channel my mental energy into my academics, and I had a great semester! Although classes were changed to a pass/fail grading scale, I believe I could have potentially gotten all A's if it were on a regular

grading scale! Additionally, I designed a robot that was capable of performing many functions, and although I was not able to build it at home, I was proud of the design I came up with.

As I mentioned in my last note to you, my summer was spent working as an intern for Lockheed Martin's U2 program in Palmdale, CA. I learned a lot about the depot maintenance process, how to engage with people at various levels of the company to accomplish my goals, and the inner workings of the company. I was lucky enough to receive a return offer to work in Atlanta, GA on their C130 operation as a Vehicle System Engineer, and I happily accepted this offer! I begin work after my graduation on June 28, 2021. Outside of work, I had the opportunity explore many parts of California and the nearby region of the country. I bonded with my roommates by spending a weekend in Las Vegas, got to explore Santa Barbara and Sequoia National Forest with my girlfriend at the time, and even got to spend some time with my parents in Malibu when they came out to visit me. Overall, I had a COVID-cautious but still action-packed summer.

My fall semester was an unusual one, but one that I was very thankful for. My friends and I decided before the semester started that we wanted to live in a house and take our online classes in the same location. We stayed in house in the suburbs of Plymouth, MA. Classes were very challenging. In particular, I spent the most time on my sports engineering class and my engineering systems design class. In sports engineering, my team was tasked with conducting a technology survey for Red Bull's High-Performance Program. They wanted to measure the vertical ground reaction forces on their skateboarding athletes, so we looked into several options that could be used to provide that kind of data and presented our findings and recommendation to the head of the program. In my engineering systems design, the class's

goal was to design an autonomous underwater vehicle (AUV) capable of collecting various types of data over missions lasting longer 30 days. I was designated the leader of the propulsion team, and together with the peers on my team, helped to design the propeller system that would propel the vehicle. Although the course load was challenging, I managed to find plenty of time to hang out with my friends at the house. We spent a lot of time playing pickup basketball and working out at the local gym, but my favorite times were when we would all sit down for dinners and just talk. I'm blessed to have a lot of great friends that push me to learn more about the world and appreciate various points of views. Overall, I would definitely call it a successful semester!

And that is 2020 in a nutshell! I was fortunate to avoid getting sick, and although I knew several people who got the virus, they all ended up being okay, thankfully. This year has taught me to never take anything for granted, especially your health and support system. I'm blessed to have had both good health and an amazing group of family and friends to help me get through these times, and I hope that we've been able to share that good fortune.

Thank you for your investment in my education and development as an adult. Students that are fortunate enough to call themselves Schulze Scholars should do their best to make the most of their academic opportunities and use their new knowledge to give back to the world. I know that will do my best to do so. I would not be the man I am today without your generosity, and I will remember your kindness for the rest of my life.

Sincerely,

Sam Gantman