

In the fall of 2010, I plan to pursue a degree in biomedical engineering at Clemson University. The name of the major sounds somewhat extravagant, but simply put it means applying principles of mathematics, chemistry, and physics to the health field. Examples of what this field accomplishes are artificial hearts, hip and knee replacements, cell grafting and much more. This is a prestigious and rigorous program at Clemson. Generally speaking, every math and science teacher I've had in the past four years at Beaufort High School has urged me to pursue an engineering field because I have excelled and thoroughly enjoyed both math and science-I am a proud nerd. But my decision to endeavor in this sparsely populated area of study occurred after a heart breaking incident earlier this school year.

In one slight instant my life was completely changed. Until this point athletics had been an integral part of how I define myself. In my time at Beaufort High I participated and started in four varsity sports: cross country, volleyball, basketball (I was a captain on the basketball team for three years), and soccer. This year I was voted "Most Athletic" of the senior class and was known in the community for my play. Basketball is the sport that burrowed deepest in my heart. I made varsity since I was a freshmen and playing as a Lady Eagle was my pride and joy. I even had planned to further my basketball career to the collegiate level. But on December 14, 2009, this love and my dreams were abruptly halted in one heart-breaking landing. It was a moment that I could not recount to anyone, because it seemed to happen so fast. But at the same time, it was a moment that seemed to be in slow-motion, where I could feel every twist and torque of my left knee. Screams unwillingly erupted from my panic-stricken mouth at the pain but more so the innate feeling that something terrible had just happened. In the doctor's office the next morning I found that I had torn my ACL and lateral meniscus. To athletes, the word 'ACL' is taboo, because once it is torn, surgery is eminent and a return to the court is a far off dream. I had surgery the following Monday and I realized that knee surgery is something I wouldn't wish on my worst enemy. From the experience I learned-and am learning-two things. First, while independence can be a good thing, accepting help is as well. I've always been someone who loves to be in control and do everything for myself. But for about two weeks after surgery, I could hardly even go to the bathroom and get in bed by myself. I learned that accepting help is not a form of weakness, and sometimes is a necessity. Also, I learned that patience is definitely a virtue. For the past three months, I have been going to therapy two or three times a week. And for someone who likes to see fast results, the slow 6-9 month process has been a test of the will. Having just reached the halfway mark of being fully recovered, I have learned to appreciate and celebrate the small accomplishments, such as reaching full range of motion or my quad muscle 'firing' correctly. Accepting help and celebrating the small things in life are two timeless lessons that I will take with me to college and in my life afterward to help me encounter further success. This high school experience specifically affected my choice of biomedical engineering.

With a degree in this field, I plan to research and find a way to repair knees (specifically ACL repairs) in such a way that the recovery time will be cut down. Knowing first-hand the heartache of having to watch your team from the sidelines has inspired me to try and take this gut-wrenching feeling from future athletes.

My goal in life stems from my religious beliefs. I serve a God who sacrificially died so that I might live a life of abundance and live eternally with Him in heaven. While

I'm blessed with more days on the earth, I have the conviction to live my life in such a way to glorify God by showing others the same love He showed me, and to do everything to the best of my ability. A life's motto that has been a reason for my success thus far comes from Ephesians 6:7 which says "Do all things as if you were doing them unto the Lord and not to men". Simply stated my goal is to conduct myself with excellence and to love those around me; esteeming them higher than myself. If there is some way to positively impact the lives of others with my brain, then I will gladly jump on the opportunity. A degree in this major will allow me to do just that.

Extra credit: After completing this essay, my decision to major in biomedical engineering has been strengthened. Enumerating the reasons for my decision and putting them on paper has been a helpful tool in deepening my conviction to use the intelligence I was gifted with to help fellow human beings.