

Christian Cappelluti

Letter to Committee on Scholarships and Student Aid

*To: The Committee on Scholarships and Student Aid
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*From: [Christian Cappelluti](#)
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As part of my application process for becoming a *Thomas e. & Ruth Mullen Scholar* of the *Upperclass Carswell Scholarships*, I am requested to submit a letter that includes an account of my academic progress, leadership, extracurricular activity, and contributions to university life. In regard to this, I chose to submit a copy of two essays that I wrote when I was invited to be a member of the *Beta Gamma Sigma Honor Society*, last year. I believe that what follows gives a good account of my personality and achievements in life.

- 1) **Discuss your most important accomplishments to date (please limit to three or four). Describe the role that personal commitment played in each situation.**

The single most important accomplishment in my life is my music. I started composing music, playing instruments, singing, and writing songs, when I was 8. As of today, I have written over 100 compositions, the great majority of them being songs in a pop style. I have recorded approximately half of all the music that I have written, in my own home recording studio, which I first set up when I was 12.

Those tapes containing my songs are what I consider physical evidence of the greatest accomplishment in my life, in addition to being some of the most precious things that I treasure. The main reason for this is that each song captures my feelings, sadness, hopes, dreams, experiences, and ideas, at specific times during my childhood, adolescence, and maturity. Each song contains a story, and each song is part of myself. I am very proud of being able to express my own thoughts and feelings in a musical form, and immortalize them in a song.

A second reason for considering my music my greatest accomplishment is that I realize that my music writing skills have dramatically changed over the years. In other words, the kind of melodies, harmonies, and progressions that I use in my music today is much more “evolved” than what I used 5 years ago. I believe this reflects a growth that parallels my general intellectual growth in fields other than music as well.

A third reason is that I play virtually all the instruments on my recordings, through the use of multi-

track recording technology.

I taught myself how to sing and how to play the piano, guitar, bass, flute, synthesizers, and other instruments, so that I could be the only person responsible for all the sounds in my songs. Learning how to play all the instruments up to a level that I consider satisfactory obviously required a great deal of personal commitment. Also, I consider myself to be a perfectionist, and I am willing to re-record a certain part of a song a hundred times or more, if I think there is room for improvement. Personal commitment, again, plays a major role.

In addition to these self-rewarding aspects of my music, there are some more formal accomplishments that also relate to my music, and where personal commitment was essential. These include several awards and number one prizes given to The Ocean, a rock band of which I was the leader for more than three years, and that broke up when I left for College in 1994, and, recently, my name appearing as a composer/arranger/musician on Mina's latest CD, which came out last November. Mina is the most famous Italian female singer of all time, with millions of records sold in Italy, Europe, and worldwide. It was a great honor to work with her and to have my name on one of her albums.

2) **Elaborate on your leadership and community service activities (university or other), explaining why you have pursued them and what you have gained from them.**

As I am a foreign student coming from Italy, it is very expensive for me to attend college in America (I spend several thousands of dollars each year for travel expenses alone). Therefore I am planning to complete my degree in a total of six semesters. I am also unable to attend summer school and, consequently, I have to concentrate all my efforts on my business curriculum during the academic year. This, unfortunately, leaves very little time for any extracurricular activity. Honestly, the only two activities that I currently manage to keep up with, other than pursuing my degree, are an independent study in advanced ear-training techniques (something that I need for my music), and physical activity (I exercise on a daily basis to maintain fitness).

In regard to leadership activities at the university, I try to do my best within my business curriculum (and Open Curriculum, to which I was admitted during my first year at Wake Forest) framework. By that I mean that each time a group effort was required in any of my classes (it happened four times, so far), I have usually taken the lead and directed the project, assigning tasks to individuals, setting internal deadlines, etc. The results have always been very good. In addition to that, I have been a Teaching Assistant at the Italian Language Lab.

Outside the university, however, I have always been deeply involved in leadership activities. I have been the leader of five rock bands, the last one being very successful in Italy, and I have recently worked as an arranger for one of the Italian most famous artists of all time. The role of the arranger is certainly the one of a leader, having to conduct all the musicians performing on a particular piece of music. I have pursued these activities because they are very important steps towards a successful career in the music business, and I can say that I have gained a tremendous amount of experience from them. If I had to do similar things now, I am sure I would do them better, or at least more quickly and more efficiently.

Another leadership activity that I pursued while in Rome was the establishment of a music program at my old high-school, for students who were interested in modern music. I thought giving those

students an opportunity to improve their music skills was very important, and I was the founder and the supervisor of the program.

There are also quite a few leadership activities that I pursued outside the field of music, the most important one being the founding of a poetry/literature reading society called “I Poeti Dannati.” This society is comprised of seven full-time members and several guests who occasionally join the society during its periodic meetings. At these meetings, members read their own or somebody else’s works, and then a debate follows with everybody commenting and expressing opinions about the meaning and the value of what has been read. I think participating in these meetings has been very important for my personal growth as a human being, as well as helped me to shape a lot of my values and ideas.

Christian Cappelluti

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