SIT Application

Briefly describe your family (occupations, interests, etc.).

My father, Carlton Laing, is originally from Norfolk, Virginia and is currently retired. His career has included life guarding, insurance, and Executive Director of the National Guard Association. He now edits our church newsletter, constantly plays handyman and reads voraciously. My mother, Michiyo Yamaguchi Laing, lived in Tokyo until she went to CSUSF for graduate school. She has taught at several universities and currently is Office Manager of The Legal Division of the California State Department of Social Services. My parents share a mutual love of ballroom dancing, skiing, and tennis. I am their only child.

Briefly describe your home community.

I grew up in Carmichael, a pleasant and relatively diverse suburb of Sacramento. I always loved my classmates but we were always a little segregated from a majority of the school in our accelerated classes. Martial arts, church and volunteer work at a local hospital involved most of the people I interacted with on a regularly basis. My church is primarily Japanese American which has kept me in touch with my mother’s culture.

Briefly describe extracurricular activities, major achievement, travel and living experiences away from home.

At Stanford, I volunteer as a Self Defense/ Sexual Assault prevention instructor and tutor a 7th grader for the East Palo Alto Tennis and Tutoring program. I play alto saxophone in a jazzy Latin-funk band (En Fuego) with some friends around and off campus. Last spring I founded the Stanford Capoeira club, bringing the amazing Afro-Brazilian martial art/dance to the campus. At home I earned my second degree black belt in Kenpo Karate and graduated from high school with a full International Baccalaureate diploma. In the summer of 1996 I lived in Costa Rica for a month as an exchange student and for spring break in 1999 I spent a week in Bolivia helping build a church as part of Cornerstone, a university ministry group sponsored by Menlo Park Presbyterian.

Briefly describe your main academic interests.

Since elementary school I have been intrigued by biology and more recently this interest has been directed toward molecular biology involving DNA repair and cancer studies. My other interests within biology include paleobiology and environmental/zooological biology. Biology is my major and Comparative Studies in Race and Ethnicity is my minor. An understanding of race relations and identity are topics which I yearn to incorporate into my academic career. I intend to continue my musical interests and pursue an M.D./Ph.D.

List any courses in which you are currently enrolled

Biology 52 (Biochemistry, Molecular Biology, and Cell Biology), Biology 44x (Core Experimental Laboratory), Chemistry 131 (Organic Polyfunctional Compounds), Music 20C (Jazz Arranging and Composition) and Asian American Studies 211 (Asian Americans of Mixed Race). Note: this is my heaviest course load yet due to the number of classes I needed and desired to take. In total, this is 20 units compared to the average 15.

Statement of Purpose:

Before arriving at Stanford I knew I wanted to spend a portion of my academic college experience in another country. I had not heavily considered which country but my previous experience in Costa Rica was amazing. Living in a foreign country allows one to see and experience life in a completely alternate perspective. I would like to study abroad this fall in the context of Brazil where I may experience and study the most pronounced racial and economic stratification in Latin America. Hopefully some of the classes I take will contribute to my CSRE minor. There is an independent project application and essay in addition to the preliminary application questions which I sent two weeks ago. For my independent project I plan to research racial discrimination in Brazil’s health institutions. A great bonus will be learning Portuguese and training in Capoeira!