Dear Professor Sidibe,

This is Juan Cardenas; it is currently 3:37am, on my phone I have my chill mix playing which consist of alternative music which helps “unwind and relax” (according to apple music). The reason behind me writing what seems to be useless information, is that a big part of who I am has to do with music. Music has been one of the most helpful outlets for someone as egotistical as me, it has helped with many situations that have gravely affected my life and changed me, I am still not sure if it did for the greater good. I was born in Ecuador, however I came here when I was two and half on august of 2001, a month before 911. Growing up I wasn’t very fond of my culture, to be honest I barely even liked stating my nationality, but as I grew older I started to appreciate my nations rich culture. The food is amazing, truly tasteful, ranging from cow to guinea pig. I get to experience everything there is to eat, because I have no religious restrictions. Ecuadorians are for the most part Roman Catholics, which is safe to say is one of the most lenient religions out there. Women don’t have to wear certain clothing, we do not fast or spent countless hours at a church or temple, the list goes on. Yet our belief in God is very strong. Religion heavily influences culture, which is why in my culture it is of upmost importance to respect your parents and their decisions, and not to argue with them about it either. I guess you could say in my culture as many others, women are expected to know how to cook and clean but those ideals are slowly ceasing to exist as its practically dying out with my generation. For the most part Ecuadorian parents are highly strict and thanks to my parents being so I grew up with morals that make me a better man.

Writing and reading for me have never been some of my favorite things to do, most teachers assigned it because they needed to give us work and more than half the time I was forced to read and write about topics that honestly weren’t important or interesting at all. However when there was a topic of interest I was all for it, and truly intrigued. when I write my own thoughts and ideas to help relieve stress writing turns into one of my favorite things to do. Same goes for reading if it’s something intriguing, genuine, and heartful I would be 100% interested. My current major at the time honestly is a place holder. Economics and finance, it is interesting but I am not sure I am truly for it or if it is for me. The classes are alright and I do understand what I am doing in it and what is going on. I was told by many councilors and professors to take it easy and explore so that is what I am doing for the time being. My journey to college wasn’t a hard one, from a young age since I can remember my parents drilled into my head that college is the main goal to be a “professional”. I guess it is a product of my culture being pressured towards school in general no matter the kids opinion.

My goals, if I was asked the same question two years ago my immediate response would be get rich no matter what the cost. Over time I realized how 2D I was viewing my goals and future, instead I have changed it I aim more towards my happiness. I’ve read a quote one time it went “ if you are doing what you love, and it pays the bills then you’ve succeeded” that changed my ideals so quick. I now only wish to do something I love no matter the income it brings, meet a wonderful women to share the rest of my life with, grow a family and just be happy. In my short term goals I really aim towards finding happiness in the present and focus on school.

*Sincerely*,

Juan Cardenas