3. SHORT ESSAYS

Please respond to the following essay topics. Your responses may be up to 250 words but should not exceed the space provided.

1. Stanford students are widely known to possess a sense of intellectual vitality. Tell us about an idea or an experience you have had that you find intellectually engaging.

There were few dull minds in San Jose the spring of 2010. Around 1600 teens from around the world streamed into the heart of Silicon Valley for the Intel International Science and Engineering Fair; for me, it was an unforgettable first glimpse of the talent and imagination of my global peers.
Perhaps it was the discovery that innovation is contagious, that science is a universal language for the young, but as I strolled through the massive exhibition hall on judging day, gasping at the elaborate schematics and full-scale engineering prototypes, I suddenly felt a tantalizing sense of belonging. It was enthralling and humbling, the realization that I too was a part of a community bound by a passion for knowledge and willingness to devote thousands of hours of research to obtain answers to our inquiries.
Yet even as the exotic flavors of the multicultural dishes faded away, a vivid impression still lingers of the power of intellect and the celerity with which it struck down instantly all language, cultural, and mortal barriers. For a week, this microcosm of the future generation, my future generation, transcended international conflicts and tensions and dispelled the resentment and problems that plague modern society; for a week, we lived simply to see and feel and cooperate and learn - from ourselves and from each other. It was inspiring to hear a myriad of accents and languages mingling, my own among them, exploring the same interests and hopes of bettering the world through our leadership and research. Even though I will probably never again meet the Austrian girl with whom I gossiped about neural networks or the boy from my birth city Nanjing with whom I chatted (in Mandarin!) about college and computers, I am deeply inspired by this promise of a vibrant future.

2. Virtually all of Stanford's undergraduates live on campus. Write a note to your future roommate that reveals something about you or that will help your roommate – and us – know you better.

I'm quite infamous, apparently. As divulged in the following article…
Topping the list of this (school) year's most wanted outlaws again is TPHS senior Carrie Cao, juvenile at large with a record of offenses like overachieving.
"I tell her every layout she needs to stop working so hard and go home," newspaper adviser Mia Smith said. "But she's still there at who-knows-when, editing pages in not just her Feature section but News and Sports as well. It's ridiculous." According to reliable sources, Cao is also regularly spotted as late as 9 p.m. in UCSD's Pacific Hall laboratories scribbling hazardous data in a lab book.
While loyal friends refused to betray her whereabouts, neighbors are encouraged to watch for a short, bubbly figure lugging an oversized backpack and a Canon EOS Rebel. Never seen without a voluminous ponytail adorned by at least 3 fluorescent bands, Cao will likely be clad in varying hues of blue. Known for a laugh resembling a D Major scale, Cao does not, authorities warned, possess the stereotypical criminal appearance, as she always waxes an enduring smile and is fond of assisting peers in writing or calculus.
"Seriously, people need to be careful; she looks so sweet, but she'll hit the highest note on the clarinet and blow your eardrums to shards," band director Amy Willcox said.
Indeed, Cao tends to carry concealed weapons such as ink pens (to engage in lethal literary battles) and an army of post-its. As she is prone to prowl local streets on rollerblades, residents are advised to spread all driveways with sand or water to deter her escape.
"There's only one way to catch her," former lab partner Jamie Li said. "Make a trap with a Steinway grand and an unlimited cache of Chopin impromptus. Or burnt cookies. She absolutely adores burnt cookies."

3. Tell us what makes Stanford a good place for you.

They say when something is right, it's right in a heartbeat. That's what I felt when, at 9 years old, I skipped into Stanford's characteristic main quad for the first time. Never having imagined that a college could appear so elegant, complete with stone arches and bell towers, I vividly recall gazing at the Spanish-styled buildings, musing to myself that it was very much like what my dad had promised that our house, when we could afford one, would look like.
Indeed, I am living in a Stanfordesque home right now - red roof and beige walls and all. Of course appearances are hardly what ought to matter, but they foster first impressions, which for me have cemented into reality. Stanford had the aura that immediately made me feel that it was invigorating, deep, yet accessible. Maybe it was coincidence that I had just read about Rodin and thus elatedly recognized his Burghers of Calais; for a child, life escalates quite a bit in excitement when there is something familiar in an unfamiliar territory. But I like to think that the connection was fate.
Fueling the heart of innovative Silicon Valley, what is most appealing about Stanford is its ability to draw the top minds and most vibrant enthusiasm from thespians to politicians, writers to philosophers, and bind them by a simple German motto and a lifelong sense of entrepreneurialism. With scientific pioneers and flourishing artisans, Stanford represents the ideal balance between concrete and abstract, novelty and tradition that I value.
I realize now that everything I had believed as a little kid about Stanford was in fact true. As a child who grew up all over northern and southern California, I am a true golden coast girl, and Stanford embodies that sun, fun, and brain mixture, the bright and lucid ideology that is me.