Pranav Srinivasan

January 2020 - UCLA Fast Track Program

Origin:

I was born in Simi Valley, CA and attended Santa Susana High School.

Hobbies:

I like playing and listening to music and I can play the piano, flute, and trumpet. I enjoy listening to R&B, rap, and indie music and my favorite artist is Tame Impala. I also like basketball and I am a huge fan of the Lakers and UCLA's basketball team as well. I am interested in the stock market, and I also got into programming iOS apps using Swift this summer. I am currently working on an app that displays UCLA's dining menu with the goal of making it easier to use than the current app.

Why are you attending UCLA for Electrical Engineering?

I am attending UCLA as an electrical engineering student and I picked EE as my major because I was part of the JPL's Open Source Rover project which I joined in my junior year of high school as a beta tester. It is there that I acquired some basic skills related to electrical engineering such as designing circuits and using a soldering iron and other equipment. I really enjoyed my time as part of the project, so I felt that I would enjoy electrical engineering. As someone who has spent the majority of their life in SoCal, I always wanted to go to UCLA because it was an excellent school. I also really liked their basketball team and the overall culture of the school.

What are you interested in at UCLA?

I am interested in robotics, IoT, software engineering, and entrepreneurship. I realised this year that my interests involved a balance of CS and EE which is why I am considering switching my major to computer engineering.

And how have you pursued your interests?

Outside of taking classes relevant to my interests, I have joined RoMeLa in October 2019, which is the Robotics and Mechanisms Laboratory. This lab specializes in robotics research. I

am currently working with PhD students on the YORI project, where we are developing a fully autonomous cooking robot capable of making a large variety of foods. The current foods we are focusing on right now are fried chicken, steak, and salad. As part of my summer research, I joined LEMUR, which stands for Laboratory for Embedded Machines and Ubiquitous Robots. The focus of the lab is slightly different from that of RoMeLa, and it includes printable and origami inspired robotics, wireless communication, and control algorithms. The focus of my research was on FORAY so called because the full name, "Autonomous Agile Airship Armada", has four A's. The goal of my research is to combine the advantages of a blimp and a quadcopter to create a light-than-air autonomous airship capable of playing aerial soccer. My experiences as part of RoMeLa and LEMUR were partially responsible for me considering a switch from EE to CE.

What is your favorite aspect of the Fast Track program?

My favorite aspect is definitely the community. Even before I applied, I was talking with someone in Fast Track who went to a neighboring high school and helped me navigate the admission process. After I got admitted and got to know some of the other people in Fast Track, I was taken aback by just how nice, hard-working, ambitious, and ready to help each person was. Most of the friends I made at UCLA are from the Fast Track program, and I am really glad I met them. Being a part of the program has made my transition to university much easier, and I believe I have made a lot of meaningful life-long connections with my peers. In my free time, I like to play basketball, watch basketball, and grab some food with my Fast Track friends. At UCLA, my favorite place to get food would be either Rendezvous or Covel Commons. Outside of UCLA, it's a mix of Kopan Ramen and sometimes In-N-Out.

What about your plans for the future?

I have not entirely decided. I want to work as a roboticist or a software/hardware engineer. My current plan is to get a Masters of Engineering at UCLA and spend a couple of years in industry. After that, I would like to get an MBA from either Stanford or Harvard.