CRIMSON

Kartik's Path to UPenn's Prestigious Business School





The Challenge

The university application process is a minefield for most students.

“There’s still a lot of unfamiliarity around the application process,” Kartik explains.

However, with many members of his extended family having gone to study before him, Kartik was already aware of the advantages of the path.

He dreamed of working on Wall Street, and he knew that a degree from a top college would help him get there.

A love of finance and economics helped him narrow down his university choices to a select few. But after a tour of East Coast universities in year 10, he had his heart set on just one: the prestigious Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania.

With an acceptance rate of 9% (even lower for international students), gaining admission into one of the world’s leading business schools would not be easy.

The Results

When Kartik received an early offer to Wharton in January, he did not hesitate to accept!

Kartik’s dedicated Crimson team played a big role in his success. As he says, “What really stood out to me when working with Crimson, was that the service was really personalized and tailored to me as an individual, and my specific needs.”

“At no time along the process did I feel like anything was scripted, but rather what I needed, when I needed it.”

Kartik's Story

Kartik recently secured admission to the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania's Class of 2022.

The Wharton School is a world-leading institution for business education, with notable graduates including serial technological inventor and innovator Elon Musk, and investing extraordinaire Warren Buffett. Its alumni include the CEOs of Google, Apple, LinkedIn, General Electric, Boeing, Oracle, Pepsi, Johnson & Johnson... the list goes on.

Originally from New Delhi in India, Kartik's family moved to start a new life when he was eight years old.

Kartik says that being a citizen of both countries has helped him gain a wider perspective on the world and its many cultural groups. He believes that studying in the US will help him expand on this. "[My dual nationality] was a key driving force behind me wanting to study in the US; to gain a At no time along the process did I feel like anything was scripted, but rather what I needed, when I needed it." third perspective on the world - a more holistic perspective - and to learn from new experiences that will no doubt help me in the future," he says.

Many members of Kartik's family have earned their degrees from world-class universities, including Harvard and Columbia, and have gone on to have very successful careers.

"I visited a lot of universities in the US, including Stanford and other East Coast universities. The university that really stood out to me was Penn, due to its campus and its vibrancy."

"Later, when I was looking at universities to apply to, keeping in mind my intended courses of finance and economics, Wharton really stood out. That, combined with my campus visit, meant UPenn stood out as my first-choice university."

Signing on with Crimson gave Kartik the boost he needed, not just to his confidence, but to his chances of admission - Crimson students are 2-5 times more likely to get an offer compared to normal acceptance rates.

"My team at Crimson consisted of three key members, who helped me with all facets of preparing to apply to top US universities. There were two key figures who were really invaluable to me: Henry, who studied at a top liberal arts college in Ohio, and Zac, a senior at Yale."

"Being from top universities themselves, they both offered great personal insights, and could reflect on their own past experiences."

When asked what he's most looking forward to at UPenn, Kartik says, "At Wharton, I'll be surrounded by so many like-minded peers that are so passionate about the finance industry and the business world, just like I am."

So, what opportunities will Wharton open to Kartik?

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“I’ll also have access to some of the top professors in the world, who have written such fantastic textbooks, and have intriguing educational insights into finance and the pre-professional studies that Wharton delivers.”

And the Ivy League as a whole?

“Being part of an Ivy League university is more than what’s in its name; it’s about being part of a vibrant and successful community that has produced so many leaders and individuals who have excelled in their respective fields, both within America and in the global scene.”

To students considering the Ivy League pathway, Kartik offers some words of wisdom. “Top students in the US are not that different from top students in other countries, and because of this, the process isn’t as unrealistic as it initially seems to be.”

“The only difference really is the application process. Obviously this requires top international students to tailor-make their applications more focused towards the US. This includes building on your extracurricular profile, concentrating on your academics, and developing your holistic personal narrative which will appeal to these top universities. A lot of top students are already doing this.”

Crimson doesn’t just assist with shaping your profile; each member of your team is there to support you and keep up the motivation through what can be a stressful time. “Without Crimson, the process would have been a lot more chaotic. [My team] really gave me the confidence to apply.”

As a Wharton student, Kartik joins a league of business magnates and finance legends. Who knows, we might just have a future global CEO or famous investor in our midst. Watch this space!



How Crimson helped Kartik



Personal Essay Support

Kartik's Essay Mentor was Zach, a Yale student double majoring in Astrophysics and Applied Mathematics.

Kartik says of Zach, "He helped me brainstorm and come up with good ideas to write about in my application. The fact that he was a senior at Yale and had gone through the application process himself, ensured he gave inputs I could really trust and were really helpful in my own experience of applying to an Ivy League."

Kartik believes his personal essay played a significant part in securing his admission to Wharton. The essay's inspiration came from unusual source - none other than Enrique Iglesias.

"I chose to write about a time in the past year that probably shaped me the most, and that was embarking on a cultural exploration of Spanish culture, more specifically Latin culture. It was sparked by a song, Bailando, by Enrique Iglesias."

"When I discovered Bailando through a friend, it opened me up to the Spanish cultures. I was intrigued to research these cultures for the next few months after listening to the song. I really grew in my appreciation for the other cultures around me, and the different people who might not be from the same background, but share similar interests, and how similar we all as a community are together."

With Zach's help, Kartik was able to produce an essay that was "quite personal and quite meaningful as well."

"My SAT scores were fairly average, but I think the admissions office would have felt that my Common App essay was really genuine."



Early Admissions Round Submission

Kartik's team decided it would be best for him to apply to Wharton in the early admissions round. Since he was putting all of his study eggs in one basket, an "Early Decision" (binding) application would give him the best chance of success, as early applications are statistically shown to be admitted at higher rates.

This is to do with the fact that, percentage wise, more students who apply early are serious about UPenn and know specifically why they want to go there, meaning there's a greater proportion of stronger, more suitable candidates in the early round.

As a recent example, in the 2016-2017 admissions round, UPenn admitted 22.3% of early round applicants, but only 6.84% of regular round applicants.

Applying Early Decision meant having everything ready in November instead of the regular January deadline. Though it bit more hustle, Kartik's Crimson team helped him pull it off.

"Crimson helped me manage my time effectively," he says. His Strategist, Henry, provided holistic support and ensured Kartik achieved his application milestones. "Henry kept me in check and on time with all aspects," he explains.

Interview Training

Typically, more than 90% of UPenn applicants are offered an admissions interview, so it was crucial that Kartik knew how to impress and stand out from other applicants.

Kartik's Interview Mentor ran him through the questions he was likely to be asked, and worked with him to prepare answers that demonstrated his passion and helped his personality shine. Together, they conducted mock interviews to boost Kartik's confidence. Needless to say, he convinced the interviewer he was right for Wharton and never looked back!

