



# **Alfonso's Journey to USC**

**A Crimson Student Success Story**



# Alfonso's Journey

Each student's journey throughout high school looks completely different. Location, academics, extracurriculars, and social life all take on different forms, making each student's experience entirely unique. However, there are a few characteristics that all successful students possess: drive, passion, and curiosity.

While many students go through it alone, they don't have to — and students that work with **Crimson Education** have a **4x better chance of gaining admission to top universities!** This was no different for Alfonso. By working with Crimson to scale his extracurriculars, craft compelling essays, and produce a strong overarching narrative for his acceptance-worthy application, Alfonso received offers from 7 top US schools and is now attending the Marshall School of Business at the University of Southern California!



## Alfonso's International Education

Originally from Mexico City, Mexico, Alfonso decided to leave his home country at age 15 to attend an international boarding school in Quebec, Canada. Speaking Spanish, English, and French, Alfonso had a plethora of opportunities when it came to continuing his education.

Alfonso made the most out of high school knowing it would prepare him for the road ahead. He participated in an IB (International Baccalaureate) curriculum at Bishop's College School in Sherbrooke, Quebec, knowing a rigorous and international curriculum would set him apart from the general applicant. Alfonso also pushed himself to self-study for four AP (Advanced Placement) courses in high school to demonstrate his intellectual curiosity. Aligning his strengths with the AP exams available to him, Alfonso tested for AP Physics 1, AP English, AP French, and AP Spanish.

Knowing his drive and determination to succeed would set him up for academic success, Alfonso set his sights on academic excellence and decided to apply for top universities in the US.

"My dad wanted to study abroad when he was younger and he never really had the financial capacity to do that, and it was something he always pushed me and my sister towards," Alfonso shares. "I think it was a combination of having better schools and the connection to a different business world."

"I think that in Mexico, what happens is that you go to school and then that's it — you go back and live with your parents, and that's pretty much it. Something that really appealed to me in the US was that you go to school, but you're also living away from your parents: you're living on campus, you're living with friends, you're engaging in extracurricular activities, et cetera, and that would not have been available to me in Mexico," says Alfonso.



# Alfonso's Extracurriculars

Nearly thirty percent of a US university application is dedicated to extracurricular activities. Unlike applications to Canadian universities, the US application process focuses heavily on what kind of person a student is both in and outside of the classroom.

Alfonso worked with Crimson to scale his extracurricular initiatives in a way that made a real impact and set him apart from the crowd. He was matched with Crimson ECL (extracurricular and leadership) mentor, Donald —, a student at Brown University who worked with Alfonso one-on-one to help him identify his interests, causes he cared about, and ways to make a tangible difference.

"I had my advisor [Donald] there to make sure that I was really making the most out of my time and getting involved in high school! Donald helped me search for opportunities outside of high school to add to my extracurricular resume to boost my extracurricular resume," Alfonso recalls.

The pair worked closely together and identified two areas of interest in Alfonso's life that he wanted to elaborate on further: golf and community service. As the captain of his school's golf team, he knew he wanted to use his skills to make a difference. Alfonso worked with his community and organized a golf tournament that raised money for the village of Gandiaye in Senegal. With the funds raised, Alfonso and his team built a library for a local school and bleachers for the basketball court that was built the previous year. "That was something that I never would have done without Crimson," Alfonso reflects.

In addition to this big leadership project, Alfonso also participated in a variety of extracurriculars. He served as the Cadet Corps Commanding Officer, Student Ambassador, President of Student Council, Class Prefect, News Club Co-Founder & Head, participated in NHSMUN, and was the captain of Boys Basketball and Soccer teams.

## Why Crimson?

The support available to Alfonso in high school when it came to applying to university was not geared towards the US. "My high school was definitely very focused on Canadian admissions," he shares. "They knew a little bit about admissions for the US but it was very selective: mostly opportunities in the Northeast and often geared towards schools with hockey programs."

Working with Crimson gave Alfonso access to over 3,000 education experts eager to help students like him succeed. While his school's guidance counselor assisted Alfonso with course selection, scheduling AP exams, and reading drafts of his personal statement, Alfonso says, "my main support came from Crimson."

Crimson also helped Alfonso identify and apply to various competitive merit scholarships. He ended up securing substantial scholarships from multiple schools like USC and Northeastern.





# Crimson's Strategy

Alfonso worked one-on-one with a few different members of the Crimson team to finish high school on a strong foot and prepare for a competitive application cycle. "Being from Mexico and then studying in Canada, I didn't really know much about the process for applying to university in the US, and Crimson really helped me understand and have a better grasp on how that worked," Alfonso shares. "I also have to be honest-- I had no idea of where I wanted to study! Initially, I thought I wanted to go to Stanford. Then after I started working with Crimson, I was really able to find more universities that I thought I would be interested in."

Alfonso was paired with Crimson's Senior Strategist, George. Crimson's Strategists are responsible for providing overarching admissions and academic strategies to students by creating individualized plans and executing them in collaboration with the Crimson Team in order to reach a student's goals. This was a feature of Alfonso's program that made a huge difference.

"George really helped me out with the bigger picture and was a huge help because I was really able to grasp everything that I needed to do in a holistic manner. He guided me through every single detail that I needed to consider to make the most out of my time," Alfonso recalls.

Alfonso was also paired with an SSM (Student Success Manager) named Megan. Both the Strategist and SSM serve as the cornerstone of every successful student's Crimson program. SSMs are specialists in student success, with responsibilities revolving around helping the student meet deadlines, staying organized, and managing their stress and workload.

In addition, Alfonso was paired with an Athletics Strategist that helped him prepare for the recruitment process. One of Alfonso's goals was to earn offers to play golf at universities in the United States. By working with Furkan, an Athletic Strategist at Crimson, Alfonso was able to prepare the proper materials to be noticed by several different Division III universities for his golf performance - and eventually received two offers to play golf at the Division III level.

Finally, Alfonso was paired with an SAT mentor, Varun, who helped him prepare for the standardized test. The pair worked together to help achieve a score Alfonso was proud of.

"My team really prepared me properly. I had a lot of support throughout the process to make sure that I really increased my chances of being as successful as possible in all of these very competitive applications," Alfonso reflects.





# Tough Decisions

The most difficult part of the application process for Alfonso came after the applications were submitted: “I never really thought that deciding which university to go to would be probably the hardest part of the whole application process. I remember sitting down with George after I got the letters back and I was like, ‘how am I even going to decide where I want to go now?’

George really helped me figure out how to research more into these universities, why I liked each of them, and sort of like compare and contrast. I think I had a running document of like over 10 pages on all of these universities,” jokes Alfonso.

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# What's next for Alfonso?

While he has a few more years left at the Marshall School of Business at USC, Alfonso has big dreams he looks forward to.

"It all boils down to four words: work hard, play hard!" shares Alfonso. "Everyone here at USC is incredibly smart, really wants to succeed in life, and is very driven. They like to network. They like to meet other people and see what they're up to on both the academic and professional sides. I think that it's really great being able to have that combination of that."

Alfonso looks forward to interning with Goldman Sachs or Credit Suisse in the coming summers and pursuing a career in investment banking.

Until then, Alfonso is making the most of life at USC and is involved in several on-campus organizations.



## Alfonso's Advice

"You really do get what you put in with Crimson. They'll have as many resources as you want and as much help in any area that you need. But you will only get the most out of your experience if you are willing to put in a lot of work from your side as well," Alfonso advises.

As for his advice for Canadian students considering studying in the US, Alfonso shares "Canada, even though I do know that there is a little bit more of a finance presence. I don't know if the opportunities would have been the same." Alfonso expresses, "Definitely do your research on those different countries that you might be interested in and see what attracts you and what maybe you don't like as much. Where do you think would be the best fit and where you can take the most advantage of the opportunities that that place can offer you?"

Alfonso's hard work, research, and decision-making led him to a university that's the perfect fit for him. However, it's a journey that looks vastly different for each student. When it came to what Alfonso is most proud of, he shares: "I'm definitely very proud of my accomplishments and everything that I've done so far. I was always a very driven and hardworking person in high school. But I think what I'm most proud of is always having that next goal, rather than settling with what I've done. I think that that's truly what I guess is really important to me."





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