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DEEPAK SINGH (NEURO & COMPUTER SCIENCE '23) WINS TALIESIN PRIZE FOR DISTINCTION IN ART OF LEARNING

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COMPUTER SCIENCE '23) WINS TALIESIN PRIZE FOR DISTINCTION IN ART OF LEARNING

Deepak Singh's education took a turn during his first year at Harvard when he was diagnosed with glaucoma, an incurable disease that causes damage to the optic nerve. The disease shook up his life, prompting him to explore existential philosophy and the roots of intelligence. After persevering through a pandemic, he is graduating this year with a joint concentration in Computer Science and Neuroscience with a secondary in Philosophy and has been named as one of three 2023 recipients of the **Taliesin Prize for Distinction in the Art of Learning**.

Established in 2020, the Taliesin Prize recognizes three graduating seniors who make bold and creative curricular choices and exemplify curiosity throughout their educational career. "I'm really happy to have received the Taliesin Prize!" Singh says. "Receiving the prize made me reflect on my academic journey in a way that I hadn't previously. It's funny how neatly the narrative of my education seems to come together, given there was barely a plan and I was really just doing what excited and inspired me."

"Deepak is an exceptionally talented scholar with a record of

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Deepak Singh

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uncommon, as well as a secondary in Philosophy. Moreover, he took a wide range of classes from different divisions, including economics and government. His breadth is impressive and did not come at the expense of his training in the life sciences. His interest in biology is deep: apart from his integrated thesis on neural network mechanisms he is running a separate start up project (unrelated to his thesis) to use machine learning to predict new molecular targets for glaucoma. His path at Harvard is striking and sets an inspiring example for intellectual curiosity and engagement."

After his glaucoma diagnosis in his first year, Singh had to leave Harvard to recuperate from a surgery. When he returned, he sought solace in the study of philosophy. "Although I fell in love with philosophy, I quickly grew tired of treating my education as therapy by fixating on my suffering," he recalls. "I left theology behind for law, metaphysics, and finally, the mind, which as the source of all intelligent thought, was my greatest fascination."

"But the answers philosophy offered were unsatisfyingly divorced from reality," he continues. "To understand intelligence, I needed to build it. After a pandemic-stricken year at home learning to code, I spent my junior year exploring computation, learning, and their physical implementations in the brain. At first, neuroanatomy was a source of inspiration for my own neural networks, but it soon transformed my understanding of my own condition."

Singh's curiosity led him to join the Kreiman Lab as a deep

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