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College Cover Letter

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Dear Sir or Madam:

It is my delight to write to you to apply for a place in [Latin American studies]. My first impression of Latin America began with an episode of a TV program called Around the World, talking about the Amazon rainforest. From then on, the mysterious rainforest and its magnificent animals came into the dreams of a girl living in the northeast of China.

Enthusiasm for the distant world grew with age and increased knowledge. I decided to use a more direct way than watching a documentary to understand the distant world. When I entered university, I choose Portuguese as my major. In addition to learning a foreign language that I love, other courses deeply inspired me. [The introduction to sociology] made me start questioning the way we live and encouraged me to think more about what I read in the newspaper and in academic books. In particular, it is fascinating to see how social problems are constructed and dealt with through public policy. In the third year of college, I went to the Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul (Porto Alegre, Brazil) as an exchange student, continued to study Portuguese, and began to explore the Brazilian culture. Of all the courses, the most impressive was about Brazilian film. Because in movies like Elite Squad and God City, Brazilian society is very different from what I felt in campus life. Brazilian film is full of injustice, corruption, and violence. At the time, I thought that might be an artistic exaggeration of the dark side of society. However, my opinion changed quickly after graduating from college.

I joined, an energy infrastructure construction company, working as a member of the commercial department. Since the beginning of my career, I have worked at the branch office in Rio de Janeiro, which is the Latin American Regional Headquarters of the company. In this beautiful city, I experienced the 2014 World Cup and the Rio 2016 Olympic Games. However, life in Brazil is much more than these joyful and exciting memories. In the last six years, I have gone through three robberies. On the way back home from work, I was nearly hurt when passively involved in the protests asking for the impeachment of former president Dilma Rousseff. Several times during the bidding on the new construction project, the company was required to sign a statement that it did not have a relationship with the companies involved in the anti-corruption investigations into "XXX." This strict action even implicated four former Peruvian presidents. These experiences remind me of the films analysed during the exchange period. At that moment, I knew the movies were not just an exaggeration of the dark side of society. The social gap between rich and poor, the violence, and the corruption exist in real life, and they are even more cruel than in the movies. My company was invited to study the project to create an energy transmission line between Manaus (capital of Amazonas, Brazil) and Boa Vista (capital of Roraima, Brazil) to place the state of Roraima in the National Energy system. The project has been suspended for many years due to environmental protection factors. It was reactivated because the state of Roraima is supplied with Venezuelan energy and has been suffering from blackouts caused by the economic and political crisis in the neighbouring country. The Argentine peso depreciation this year caused serious concern for the commercial group of the company because there are many types of equipment that need to be imported. The economy and politics of the Latin American countries are deeply linked due to colonial history and natural conditions, which I learned in contemporary International Economy and Politics classes in my last year of university and have seen in my work in Latin America. All these experiences led me to the idea of studying Latin American issues. I felt that social movements and changes in international relations affect every individual in society. They are no longer just events in the news or a topic in the sociology class.

My interest was further aroused in 2018 when the company established an internal research institute, "Power Transmission and Distribution Engineering Research Institute (America)." The institute's purpose is to study the technical standards, the auction and the market rules of energy facilities construction in the Latin American countries. I participated in research on the socioeconomic situation of Latin-American countries and the development of the energy market in Latin America. During the study, I was exposed to a considerable quantity of information, which challenged me when using it to get to a conclusion. Then I made up my mind to pursue a master's degree in Latin American studies, aiming to gain more knowledge of this area and a scientific way of research.

As I work in the commercial contract department, I participate in a lot of contract negotiations. Being the only person that speaks Portuguese and Mandarin in the company, I often need to help both parties to avoid misunderstanding caused by cultural difference. This experience has dramatically improved my skill in intercultural communication. When reviewing contracts with my colleagues, I need to predict a variety of risk scenarios and risk mitigation measures. This experience helped me to develop relevant skills in analysing the problems and carrying out the solutions. To find strong evidence for arbitration against other parties, I worked with lawyers on filtering information from emails and letters. Also, I interviewed many witnesses, which undoubtedly improved my ability to investigate. In the negotiations with local people who hindered our transmission line construction projects, I learned mutual understanding and empathy. My educational and professional experiences have equipped me with the initiative, passion, competence, and commitment necessary to complete the master's programme in Latin American Studies.

When I reviewed the course of [Latin America Studies] of Leiden University, especially the public policy track, I felt that I had found the right curriculum, because the programme compactly meshes a number of my academic interests together, including Latin American culture, politics, and sociology. At the same time, Portuguese and my work experience in Brazil can also be helpful. [The university not only has courses about the fast-changing nature of current state-civil society relations in this region] but also offers the chance to do fieldwork research on specific programmes implemented by state agencies as well as by local governments, NGOs, and citizens' initiatives in several Latin American countries. I believe that a combination of theory and practice will broaden my knowledge and deepen my understanding of the topic as a whole. Leiden University has been an international university since its founding in 1575. More than 115 different nationalities are represented in the student body. Campuses are located in the safe and historical cities of Leiden and The Hague, making it a perfect place for regional and international issues' study.

I hope to have the chance to be enrolled in the course. After the classes in the first term have provided me with invaluable tools and knowledge, I want to return to Brazil or to another Latin American country to study in-depth social issues [such as anti-corruption and public safety]. Besides, although the Latin American countries and China have entirely different historical cultures and social systems, they are all developing countries, emerging economically. It makes sense to compare their development process and public policy. An excellent example of this is the fact that while the "Lava Jato" scandal is ongoing, the Chinese government is also carrying out a series of anti-corruption actions.

[Latin America studies] is the path I want to take, leading to the career I strive for and to the life, no matter how challenging, I intend to live.

Thank you for considering my request. I look forward to your positive response.

Yours faithfully,

Name Surname

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