Arjun Raghavan

Chicago, IL · arjun.raghavan.test@example.com Applying to: Northwestern Kellogg full-time MBA, 2026-27

Fictional applicant written for this sample. VoltYard Charging, Corrigan Rural Electric Cooperative, the West Ridge Cricket Club and both recommenders are invented.

Program and round

- Two-Year MBA, Round 2 (January 2027).
- Intended focus: Strategy and operations, with energy and sustainability electives.
- Video essays: completed (recorded, not transcribed here).

Education and tests

- **University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign**: BS Industrial Engineering, May 2022. GPA 3.38.
- Sophomore-year GPA 2.91, with a C in Differential Equations (see Additional information). Junior and senior years 3.6.
- **Harold Washington College** (evening, graded): Financial Accounting, A (summer 2026).
- **GMAT Focus Edition**: 655 (Quant 84, Verbal 80, Data Insights 81), September 2026. First attempt, June 2026: 615.

Resume

VOLTYARD CHARGING, Chicago, IL (Feb 2024 - present) *Series B company, about 180 employees. Designs, installs and maintains charging for commercial and public fleets.*

Senior Project Manager, Fleet Depots (Jul 2025 - present)

- Lead 4 project managers running 14 active depot projects ($23M contracted) for school buses, transit agencies and delivery vans in IL, IN and WI.
- Cut average time from contract to energized site from 11.5 to 8.9 months. I proposed ordering long-lead transformers at signing, with VoltYard carrying up to $1.4M of inventory risk. Leadership approved this in Oct 2025.
- Set up a standing weekly call with interconnection engineers at 3 utilities. None of them report to VoltYard.
- Interviewed 22 candidates and hired 2 project managers. Rewrote the onboarding checklist.

Project Manager (Feb 2024 - Jun 2025)

- Delivered 9 depots with 212 chargers, on budget on 8 of the 9.

- Built a 26-charger electric school bus depot for a northwest Indiana school district. It energized 9 weeks late, and the buses ran diesel for the first 6 weeks of the school year (Essay 1).
- Wrote a bilingual English/Spanish site-safety briefing, now used on all VoltYard sites.

CORRIGAN RURAL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, Rensselaer, IN (Jul 2022 - Jan 2024) *Member-owned cooperative serving 21,000 meters across four farm counties.*

Associate Engineer, System Planning

- Wrote 10-year load forecasts for 9 substations.
- My first forecast underestimated grain-dryer load. A feeder overloaded during the Oct 2022 harvest and 340 members lost power for 5 hours. I rebuilt the method around a survey of 60 farm members and returned to that feeder's crews to explain what went wrong.
- Drafted the technical section of a $2.7M federal rural-energy grant for feeder upgrades. The grant was awarded in 2023.
- Answered the co-op's first calls from fleet owners asking how to electrify. That is why I moved to VoltYard.

EDUCATION University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, BS Industrial Engineering, 2022. Worked 15-20 hours a week throughout college: dining hall, then front desk at my parents' 34-room motel in Joliet on weekends.

ADDITIONAL

- Treasurer and Saturday league organizer, West Ridge Cricket Club, Chicago (2023 - present, about 4 hours a week, April-September). Grew the league from 6 to 10 teams. Negotiated field time with the Park District.
- Languages: English (native), Tamil (conversational), Spanish (intermediate, weekly class since 2024).
- Skills: Python and SQL for load data, Excel modeling, Primavera P6, OSHA 30.
- Interests: cricket (medium-pace bowler, slowing down), cooking my grandmother's rasam badly, Chicago Fire matches.

Essay 1: Leadership and lasting value (450 words)

In August 2024, I called the transportation director of an Indiana school district to tell her the buses would not be electric on the first day of school. The district had bought 26 electric buses with a federal grant. Parents had been told about cleaner air at the bus stop. A local TV station had filmed the ribbon-cutting rehearsal. The utility's transformer had slipped from June to late September, and I had found out two weeks after our site superintendent did.

That gap was my real problem. Nobody on the project reported to me: not the union electricians, the utility engineers, the district's facilities staff or the bus vendor. I had been running it on a polished biweekly status report that showed green until it turned red.

I changed three things. First, I moved to a 15-minute daily call with all five parties and a shared tracker. Anyone could mark an item at risk, and nobody had to defend it on the call. Second, I offered

the district a fallback plan instead of an apology. Two of our portable chargers let six buses run electric routes from week three. The rest ran diesel until energization on October 4. Third, I asked the utility's engineer, whom I had never met in person, what would help her. Her answer was "give me load data early." I sent it the same week, and we have worked that way since.

The district's director was angry, and she had reason to be. My manager, Dana Whitlock, gave me feedback I did not enjoy: "You defended the plan instead of protecting the outcome." She also pointed out that my updates ran to 900 words when the district needed three sentences. I now write the headline first. I still catch myself over-explaining when I'm nervous.

The lasting value was not that depot, which has now run two school years. It was what changed at VoltYard. I wrote up the lead-time data from 31 past projects and argued that we should order transformers at contract signing. Our CFO pushed back on the inventory risk. We settled on a $1.4M cap, and average delivery time has since fallen by more than two months. In 2025, the same director recommended us to a neighboring district.

I learned that bad news delivered early builds trust faster than good news delivered late. I also learned that influence without authority mostly means making other people's jobs easier.

Essay 2: Career goals, why an MBA, why now, why Kellogg (450 words)

Short term, I want to join a fleet-electrification or energy-infrastructure company in a strategy or business-operations role. I want to be the person who decides which markets and contracts to pursue, not only how to build them. My second choice is the energy practice of a consulting firm.

Long term, I want to run a company that builds and finances charging and energy systems for public fleets, meaning school buses and transit, in the Midwest. Many districts like the one in Indiana have a grant, a bus order and no one who understands the utility side.

I need an MBA now because my gaps have moved from engineering to business. Last spring, a sales lead asked me to sign off on a proposal promising a transit agency 98% charger uptime. I knew the agency's two-person maintenance staff could not support that number, and our contract penalties would have landed on them. I refused to sign as written and proposed 95% with a maintenance-training package. We lost the bid to a competitor who promised 99%. I still think I was right. But I could not model the deal well enough to show leadership a better version that won. Financing structures, pricing and public budgets are where I am weakest, and they are where the industry's decisions are made.

Kellogg fits how I have learned to lead: through people I don't manage. I want the strategy and finance core, and electives on energy markets and on negotiation. I also want Kellogg Board Fellows, because school boards and transit boards are my future customers and I have never sat on their side of the table. Classmates in my Chicago alumni conversations described study groups where the quiet engineer was expected to speak up and the confident talker was expected to listen. I have been both.

I will contribute the field view: what a 2,000-amp switchgear delay does to a project, and how to talk to a lineman. I will also bring the habit of running things nobody assigned me, from a 10-team cricket

league to a daily call nobody asked for. Learning Spanish on job sites taught me to ask before I explain, and I plan to bring that to Kellogg too.

Additional information

In fall 2019, my father had heart surgery. For a year, I drove home to Joliet most weekends to run the front desk of my parents' motel. My sophomore grades show it. I recovered to a 3.6 for my last two years. I took the GMAT twice. My first Quant score showed I had let my calculus fade, so I studied for three months and took Financial Accounting to rebuild finance basics.

Recommenders

1. **Dana Whitlock**, Vice President of Operations, VoltYard Charging. Current supervisor since 2024.
2. **Marcus Feeney**, Manager of System Planning, Corrigan Rural Electric Cooperative. Supervisor 2022-2024.