**Prompt 8: Beyond what has already been shared in your application, what do you believe makes you stand out as a strong candidate for admissions to the University of California?**

Interviewing an Indonesian national athlete and speaking at an International school in India? Never in a million years would I ever imagine being given such opportunities.

When my teacher offered me to interview Edgar Xavier Marvelo, a three-time wushu world champion as well as a medalist at the Asian Games and the Southeast Asian Games , I was over the moon. As this was my first official interview, I went through numerous articles online to learn the proper techniques to conduct an interview from my tone, hand gestures and even facial expressions. Practising my lines in front of the mirror, it can be said that I looked at my face more than I ever did in my whole life.

When the interview day came, I was a nervous wreck – scared that I’ll keep on mumbling, stumbling my words or even messing up this interview and embarrassing myself.

‘Ding, Edgar has entered the meeting’. I told myself, "Okay, just calm down and act normal." Firstly, I initiated small talks in order to ease the tension, and by the time the interview was about to begin, it just felt like a regular conversation with a friend. In fact, I felt confident enough to go out of my script and improvised some questions on the spot based on his answer. For example, when he said “wushu is more than just a sport, it's a way of life”, I followed it by asking if there were any quotes that helped him set up this mindset. The interview was a success as everything went by as smooth as butter and I even received a ‘well-done’ message from a couple of my teachers afterwards.

That interview experience was the boost of confidence that I needed.

A few months later, an Indian school teacher approached me through social media. She invited me to speak to an event titled "International Dimension in Schools" for A.M.M. Matriculation Higher Secondary School, one of Chennai, India's top schools.

I was asked to discuss some of my academic activities and study tips. This time, I was confident enough to speak comfortably without the limits of a script. The interactions that I had with the students who have never seen a foreigner before is something that is memorable. What surprised me was the fact that I even managed to crack a few jokes while responding to some of their curious questions about my study experience.

This whole experience has allowed my introverted self to step out of my comfort zone, attempt new things and take bigger risks in life.

Dear Victoria:

The above experiences no doubt served as opportunities for you to grow and showcase your uniqueness, and are both amazing stories!

Considering the word limit, though, you might consider including only one experience to focus on.

More importantly, to address the prompt, you can start with one unique characteristic, personality trait, or ability you want to showcase that makes you stand out. You can use the example of your experience above involving such characteristic, trait, or ability and why it matters. Detail how that uniqueness will serve you as a strong candidate for the school.

All the best!

Thalia