**1.  Why are you interested in the major you indicated as your first-choice major? (250-300 words)**

DRAFT 2

I remembered being in Grade 9 and asking my father to teach me about the stock market because seeing graphs with so many colorful red and green lines was very interesting for me. Soon, he made a Siminvest account – one of Indonesia’s local stock investment apps and I finally got to trade on my own. All his teachings about the stock market propelled me to follow the current financial news every single day and now, I’m looking at a 24% profit from my initial investment. Every time I eat breakfast, I always make sure to scroll through the Economics section on Apple news and if there isn’t much newly updated news, I will read New York Times, Washington Post, or The Guardian.

Aside from that, I often read autobiographies and memoirs of successful stock investors in order to understand their different perspectives and strategies in looking at short and long-term profits. For example, Warren Buffet uses value investing as his primary strategy while others use strategies such as growth investing, short selling, and quality investing. I always find it helpful to write notes on these different strategies, as I would do further research on them. There is always something new that can be learned about the stock market as it allowed me to discover my passion for investments because using the right strategies can allow the money invested to outpace inflation and increase in value. I would like to continue improving my technical analytical skills in identifying market trends and trading opportunities. I believe this passion of mine was what led me towards picking finance as my first-choice major.

Your application really focused on your habits and choices, demonstrating an understanding of what your future job would entail (constantly tracking news, understanding investing strategies, and so on). From this aspect, you have shown that you are a strong fit for your major.

What could make this essay stronger is if you can write about your long term goals and how being at UT Austin can help you pursue your goal better. How will you convert your passion into action after graduating? Do you advocate for any important issue that will help the society?

**4. UT-AUSTIN ESSAY (REQUIRED)**

**Note: This is the only long essay UT-Austin requires. *We do not require any of the Common App Personal Essays.* Common App Personal Essays will not be used in our holistic review process.**

**Tell us your story. What unique opportunities or challenges have you experienced throughout your high school career that have shaped who you are today?**

**Please keep your essay between 500–700 words (typically two to three paragraphs)**

DRAFT 2

A text message read "Cat, I need to talk about the rubrics and concept of the competition." My smile vanished, and my heart started beating out of my chest.

The judge, who was my teacher, called to tell me that she disapproved of the existing rubrics and concepts. Though I had a lot of questions in my mind, I quickly adjusted the plan to align with how the teachers envisioned it. **Initially, I didn’t delegate tasks to my members which made it difficult for me when I had to fix the last-minute changes. When it was last minute, I didn’t have any time to re-explain and no one would’ve understood what needs to be done. Hence, I had to suffer the consequences of having to do everything all on my own.**

After the event, I tried reflecting on everything that went wrong. Could the problem be prevented if I had delegated more and shared every process with them? This constantly runs through my mind. I’m used to accomplishing tasks quickly and efficiently and I consider delegating and explaining plans to my members will just be a setback for me. With that mindset, things just ended up backfiring. Then, I made a promise to myself to do things differently, starting with changing how I should lead my members.

A few months later, I had an opportunity to organize Walkathon, a fundraising event in my new school that gathers donations from students, teachers, and staff encouraging their families and friends to pledge a fixed amount of money for each kilometer they walk. The goal was to raise $9,000 within 2 weeks, so we must ensure that we had enough participants to achieve our goal.

This time, I knew I wanted to lead in an inclusive leadership style, different from the events I organized before. I began with distributing tasks based on the willingness and skill set of each member, especially coordinating them to ensure that each task was explained thoroughly. Apart from this, I started trusting my members because collaboration reduced workload and encouraged members’ participation. I also paid extra attention to the teachers' and head of school’s opinions towards the event proposal to avoid any kind of miscommunication by consulting with them every time there is progress or changes on the proposal and planning.

Promoting the fundraiser took a lot of trial and error as there was continuous improvisation on strategies to encourage students and teachers to participate. This time, however, I made sure to ask for ideas and opinions from each member, which led to stimulated team engagement and participation, especially during our daily meetings. They proposed innovative ideas that were nearly impossible for me to come up with if I was working alone. For instance, they suggested that we hold interviews with some of the children who would be benefiting from the fundraiser for the promotional video. Believing it would be a unique selling point to encourage participation, I entrusted them with the responsibility of creating the video.

Through each member’s contribution, our fundraiser was hugely successful, resulting in more than 100 participants joining. We collected a total of $9,200 for the Hoshizora Foundation that would transform the lives of 80+ underprivileged children in receiving access to proper education. **I felt that the impact of delegation and inclusivity empowered my members to feel a sense of belonging and led to creating greater work productivity. The role and support of each member contributed to the success of the event with effective work distribution and no last-minute changes like the End-of-Year event. Hence, the change in my leadership style made the work not only efficient but also resulted in greater work quality.**

From this experience, I learned how to become a leader who respects, listens, delegates, and communicates with their members well. A poorly organized and mismanaged factory would never result in a well-synchronized production, and I believe it goes the same way with becoming a leader. Having an exclusive leadership style will only discourage the participation of my members and cause demotivation, which is the complete opposite of what I aspire to in building a team. I can now comprehend the bigger picture of what a leader should be and how a leader can pave the path forward.

Overall, I like how your essay is streamlined and flows in a coherent manner. Your story has a clear conflict and how you grew from a particular challenge.

However, I feel that your essay would benefit by including more emotional component. For example, the second paragraph can be used to give context into how wanting to stay in control impacted your life and affected your ability in giving your best. Be more vulnerable to give some layers to your essay so that the admission officer can sympathize with your predicament.

For the second half of the essay, you’ve touched on how inclusivity makes you a better leader, so avoid reiterating it in another paragraph (these sentences have been bolded). Instead, you can talk about how leading the fundraiser successfully made you realize how effective collaboration would positively impact the society (i.e., the money to help underprivileged children). Doing so would make your make your ending more powerful.

Best wishes,

Melinda