**Describe an example of your leadership experience in which you have positively influenced others, helped resolve disputes, or contributed to group efforts over time. (350 words) – 335 words**

My most defining leadership moment was when I was appointed as the president of Misi Gizi, a CAS Project to organize a food bank for more than 650 people. During the pandemic, I had to lead a big group of 60 people in ten divisions remotely. Since we had to meet fully online, the working ability of the whole organization was hampered. Members were demotivated because there wasn’t a sense of togetherness, and it was hard for me to supervise each member’s work. Disagreements between peers became more burdensome as issues couldn’t be resolved quickly. As a result, tasks were completed inefficiently, and the whole progress wasn’t smooth sailing.

The first thing I did to make the online working environment more effective was through the use of collaborative apps, such as Google Docs, Sheets, and Meet. However, the attendance was still below target since many disliked online meetings. So, I tried to boost the groups’ morale by encouraging each head to assign each member with duties. In the beginning, work was still slow, but as their responsibility grew over time, each member’s sense of pride made them put in more effort in completing their tasks to showcase their competency, which successfully boosted our output.

I realized how disagreements could damage solidarity in organizations, but differences could also lead to growth. Even though squabbles might occur, I encouraged members to share their thoughts with their leaders. These open meetings sparked valuable discussions that led to innovative ideas, which helped me strategize the project’s direction more efficiently.

Through this experience, I became aware of the true extent of my leadership capabilities. Every leader has their own struggles, especially when working with new groups of people. It is up to the leaders to adjust their leadership style, and I did so by putting more trust in my team members rather than leading autocratically. The members’ trust in my leadership inspired me to change from being a passive person into one who’s passionate to lead and positively influence others.

**Every person has a creative side, and it can be expressed in many ways: problem solving, original and innovative thinking, and artistically, to name a few. Describe how you express your creative side. 339 words**

My food blog, Stuck With Foods, is my pride and joy. It is a digital food blog on Instagram featuring 12+ recipes from various cuisines that caught my interest. Although it was tough to set up this blog at the beginning with my zero experience in both cooking or blogging, curating the food blog truly allowed me to explore my passion for food.

Watching YouTube cooking tutorial videos and observing my mom cook daily helped me understand the versatility of food. After researching different cuisines for my blog, I was exposed to different cultures and techniques in cooking. I then experimented cooking Indonesian, Korean, and Japanese cuisines among many others to decide which dishes to feature. In creating the 12 recipes for each dish, I tried switching up combinations of ingredients and their quantities to achieve the desired flavors. When I first tried cooking my version of *kimchi* stew, I put an equal amount of kimchi and chili paste to achieve a balance of sourness and zest. However, the result was not impressive. Turns out, sugar was the key! Though it is rarely used in this dish, the combination of sugar’s sweetness, *kimchi’s* sourness, and the chili paste’s savories created the perfect *umami* flavor unique to my rendition.

Knowing that most users are visually oriented, I combined different color schemes and layouts to ensure my Instagram feed is eye-catching. After researching color psychology, I settled on red, yellow, and orange as these primary colors are known to be the most appetizing and inviting. Another part of my food blog was creating cooking tutorial videos for each dish. To make each video unique, I recorded them from multiple shooting angles. In the editing process, I noted the visual blandness of a usual step-by-step cooking tutorial. Hence, I recorded additional footages of cooking processes and used time lapses, transitions, and fillers in between cooking clips to enhance the visual quality of each video.

Stuck With Foods is the medium where I can transform my dream of making food content into reality.

**What have you done to make your school or your community a better place? 333 words**

In this day and age, digital literacy is a necessity if we want to thrive in a highly digital society. Even though 70% of Indonesians have Internet access, 40% of the population is still digitally illiterate. Knowing that this will limit Indonesia’s future generation, I decided to join an NGO called GenDigital Academy. Our mission is to spread digital literacy to people from all over Indonesia so that they can navigate through social media safely, use computers, and perform basic digital tasks.

As the Head of Curriculum, I’m in charge of designing the topics and developing the materials for, which consists of with I’ve arranged the curriculum to present general topics before exploring specific ones to make sure the students can understand correlated topics easier after learning the basics first. In addition, I verify that simple vocabularies are used so that the young learners can comprehend the materials.

We first started with lectures about Digital Safety & Etiquette to educate students on how to protect themselves on the Internet, and two of the most important lessons were how to create secure passwords and understand their presence in digital footprints. But, it soon became clear that they weren’t absorbing any of the material due to boredom. I was deeply concerned as I did not want them to mindlessly spread hate or get scammed online. Thus, to keep sessions interesting and engaging, I used games, questions, and presentations. This approach worked wonderfully! As a result, we were able to teach them data types, variables, input/output, and many more in Python.

Week by week, I’m glad to see the improvements in the kids’ coding ability and logic. From being unable to program a single line of code, they can now declare variables, modify their value, and output them all without my help. Starting with one community, I hope I can spread digital literacy to many more in the future.

**Describe the most significant challenge you have faced and the steps you have taken to overcome this challenge. How has this challenge affected your academic achievement? 348 words**

Learning back-end programming was a significant challenge in high school. To pass my Computer Science class, we needed to create a working web application. I decided to create an order management system for AHAS Partshop, a spare parts shop. To do so, I needed to complete full-stack development. The front-end programming was quite easy. However, to get the application to function, it needed back-end programming which I lacked experience in.

When I encountered problems in creating algorithms with looping, conditionals, or a mix of both, I learned to always separate the code into sections to avoid syntax misinputs, which was usually the problem. Over time, I assumed back-end programming just needed logic and everything was smooth-sailing until I had to integrate sorting and searching into the application. I tried different sorts of algorithms, but everything failed. There were five times when my code didn’t work after spending hours working on it, leaving me so discouraged that I considered abandoning the application and giving up.

However, I knew that this was not how I wanted it to end. After researching its mechanism and the process of checking each value, I was able to diagnose the problem: I had mixed up the order of the looping. Seeing how each instance of failure helped me become a better programmer, I left no stone unturned. Now, I can create back-end programming in Python or Java, which is really beneficial in completing my web application development.

Experiencing this challenge highlighted the immense perseverance that I have developed. At school, I’m less discouraged whenever challenging topics or tough assessments appear. This positive mindset raises my 6s into 7s in my Computer Science, Economics, and other subjects. My programming skills have also improved as I am now more careful and precise in making code. When leading projects or creating my own food blog, I will calmly diagnose problems in times of difficulties. The new confidence I have gained has allowed me to be promoted to the Head of Curriculum in GenDigital Academy as my peers trust that I am courageous in the face of obstacles.

Hi Varick,

Good job on finishing all of your prompts! I’ve edited and restructured parts of your essay to ensure better fluidity and coherence. Now, all of them are within word limit ☺

Wishing you the best of luck on your application,

Melinda