**Kathleen**

**Please describe how you have prepared for your intended major, including your readiness to succeed in your upper-division courses once you enroll at the university.**

“Team Yellow! Let’s begin with introducing our name, age, and where you’re from!” I eagerly began the conversation as we sat in a circle. Yet the only reply I could get was an “idk”. I sat there for a second, completely baffled, just to be saved by the bell signaling us to wrap up.

The days to come brought up new challenges as I navigated this new role as team leader. Isaac seemed to always dash across the room when I sat next to him. Tytus felt too cool for camp. Ray had no filter on his mouth. Troy, on the other hand, had his lips sealed, unwilling to participate.

I continued to pull out all the stops in attempts to tend to team yellow’s needs, but nothing seemed to work. This was until I noticed that all they wanted was attention, each in their own unique way. Isaac needed some space to flourish, while Tytus needed the reassurance. Meanwhile, Ray and Troy were bright kids who just weren't so sure how to navigate new crowds. When I began to tailor my approach to their individual needs, they too began to warm up to me.

I thought to myself, if these kids needed personalized attention, wouldn’t that be the same with their learning? I decided to dive deeper into personalized approaches to education and its impact on learning. After some background research and discussions with educational experts, I decided to take on a research project on how differentiated instruction can help teachers facilitate students’ learning to promote human flourishing. As I situated myself in the educational world through classroom observations and extensive interviews, I realized that my observations with my team yellow were applicable in the classroom setting as well.

The 10 days working at SuperCamp by Quantum Learning Global sparked a newfound goal in me. ~~As I learned to empower, inspire, and equip the children’s growth, I too matured in my interpersonal skills, which will go hand in hand with the learning I strive to gain at the University of California.~~ Immersing myself in rigorous courses will push myself to build a niche in childhood development and build an accessible curriculum that invests in young lives so that they may flourish into their full potential.

[cut 58 words] – see comments

Hi Cathleen!

It’s interesting to see how your experience working with children helped you find your personal goal ☺ I’ve left some comments above to help you tailor this better.

For this particular prompt, other than your experiences outside the classroom, the committee would like to see how your classroom experiences helped you shape your interest in this major as well. The question is quite specific since it asks you about your preparation towards your intended major.

Best wishes,

Melinda

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

The journey across the Indonesian archipelago on a propellor plane was followed by a long drive on unpaved roads and a trek through rapid rivers before we finally arrived at the village of Mangga Nipi. It wasn’t long until I realized that Sumba was not the hidden gem I had expected. I was met by a young volunteer worker who shared the urgency of the lack of education and healthcare in Mangga Nipi. Just a few days prior to our visit, a toddler had fallen ill and despite this, his parents neglected his need for medical attention. Eventually, he was given 3 doses of medicine without realizing the impact it had on the weak toddler. He passed away.

Then and there, I knew I had to act upon this overlooked issue. Stepping foot onto the remote island, I expected to serve them. Instead, they served me. Sumba opened my eyes to a world in need of change, which is where my heart lies. Whether it was providing free medical check ups to over 4000 villagers in Manggarai Timur or creating a platform for underprivileged children to explore their artistic passions, giving back to my home country is a value I will always hold onto.

This past summer, I was able to share that value with others as a community empowerment mentor at a 9-day immersive program for high school students. Guiding them through the design thinking framework allowed me to gain a new perspective on the said value. Not only was I able to give back to those at Ngaduman village, but the newly lit flame I saw as my mentees developed their observations from the empathize phase up until the implementation of the final result of their projects. .

Poverty is an intergenerational cycle that was predetermined. It was never a personal choice but instead, a reflection of society. I alone may not be able to change the world, but if I inspired just one of my students, that is progress in itself. One and one and one adds up, and just like dominoes, their newfound contagious passion for change can likewise inspire many more to come.

Hi Cathleen,

I admire your passion to give back to the community, especially how you served the remote areas and the underprivileged communities. It is definitely a quality that you’d want to highlight for the admissions committee.

There are several questions that should be covered in your essay:

1. Did you contribute a positive change in your school or in your community?

From your story, it is clear that you have started an impact in your community. However, it is unclear on how you’ve brought about the change. What did you do in each of the village: Mangga Nipi, Manggarai, and Ngaduman?

1. What steps have you taken to accomplish this?

Make sure to write about the things you’ve done in the villages you’ve mentioned. Did you help build a school? Teach young children? Assisted in providing some medical help?

This way, there’d be a clearer answer that demonstrates your visible contributions to your community.

Best wishes,

Melinda

**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.**

In first grade art class, I learned that by mixing blue and yellow, I would create green, which I used to paint skies. That was what I knew creativity to be. When it was time for math class, I was taught that 2 multiplied by 2 equals four. “Problem solving isn’t too difficult,” I thought to myself.

As I grew older, I figured out that the sky was in fact, blue, not green and that the alphabet was apparently part of math. I soon realized that creativity and problem solving were much more than what I knew it to be in first grade. Instead, it was an abstract concept. Though in retrospect, the latter isn’t at all wrong, to me, the idea of creative problem solving seemed to be a more interesting knot to untangle.

As a strategist intern at Maleo by Future Creative Network, I was able to hone my critical thinking and innovative skills into work. At Maleo, the strategy to rethink forward is core; rethinking how brands think, rethinking the way consumers think, and rethinking the craftsmanship of creative thinking. Just like how different ratios of blue and yellow create different variations of the color green, I too must identify the right balance between divergent and convergent thinking. I learned that there was no true formula in real life except creativity itself. By rethinking problems as questions, I gain the opportunity to think beyond the constraints of a problem. Tasked with reputable clients like Volvo, I was to strategize a campaign relaunching their hybrid vehicles in Indonesia. By uncovering and analyzing data-driven human insights pertaining to clients’ and consumers’ issues, I was able to look into behavioral patterns that became a foundation to strategizing for a campaign catered towards their needs.

Hi Cathleen,

For this particular prompt, the question is straightforward and practical. Basically, the admissions officers want to read about the way you express your creativity.

Here’s an outline that you can follow to strengthen your essay:

1. Think of a time where you faced a problem: you can use your internship experience and your Volvo campaign to start your essay.
2. What was the issue or problem from your perspective? (think about why this problem was particularly hard for you. Say you’re inexperienced/lacked mentor/had different vision etc.).
3. Now think of the same situation from the perspective of another person who was there with you (team members/mentor/boss/other interns)
4. How was your approach different from that other person’s? By showing that you were able to come up with a new solution, you’re highlighting your use of creativity.
5. Did your imagination and intuition guide you to the solution?
6. What have you gained from successfully managing the Volvo campaign? How did your transformed mindset affect the other faucets of your life?

By restructuring your essay this way, there’s a clear display of an event/experience where your creativity shone.

* ***How does it apply to the rest of my life?***

**Beyond what has already been shared in your application, what do you believe makes you a strong candidate for admissions into the University of California?**

Step 1: At low speed, mix the cream cheese.

Step 2: While the mixer is running, add the sugar, scraping down the sides until mixed well.

Step 3: Crack in the eggs and mix thoroughly.

Step 4: Add in vanilla, lemon juice, and flour and mix again until well incorporated.

Step 5: Mix in the sour cream.

Step 6: Divide the batter evenly into its individual molds and bake in a preheated oven at 160ºC for 30 minutes.

Sounds straightforward enough, right? Apparently not.

A few overflowed baking trays and a burnt finger later, my cheesecake recipe was finally set into place. My legs were sore from a long day of baking but the sweet feeling didn’t only come from the many cheesecakes I devoured, but also the excitement of launching the first product of my baking start-up, Cakes and Crumbs.

As I continued to experiment with ingredients and baking styles, it allowed me to add my own spin to the classic New York cheesecake. My kitchen provides me with an outlet to unwind, where I would spend hours on end accompanied by the whirring sound of my mixer and the fragrant smell of my confectionery creations. That is where I felt free to explore, venturing into the world of possibilities.

Looking beyond the four walls of my kitchen, baking has taught me that things are going to get messy. That I might end up with a face full of flour just like how I will face obstacles in my life. Much like the notes I jot down throughout my baking trials, the same goes with life. What happened? What could be improved? What can be done to fix the situation?

By embracing all the trials and errors, I will continue to work towards the perfect recipe for my future. Icing fixes up broken cakes and my tenacity will continue to ice the cake to perfection. With the endless array of ingredients provided at the University of California kitchen, who knows what cake I’ll bake next.

I love your approach to your personal essay. It is clear that baking is more than just a hobby to you, and you’ve stepped outside your comfort zone to develop your interest into a business.

To make your essay even stronger, make sure to include all the positive traits you’ve developed after immersing in the world of baking. However, it is still unclear to me as a reader to see what makes you you other than your love for baking? What sets you apart from the other candidates?

I’ve highlighted some sentences above so that you can include a real lesson that you’ve gained from your previous failures of making the perfect recipe. For example, you’ve learned that baking is messy, so you can say that you are someone who will not shy away from challenge. You are adventurous, looking for other ways to always improve yourself. Use more adjectives to describe yourself, and that way, there’d be a clearer description of who you are as a person. What are your strengths that the people around you do not possess?

Best wishes,

Melinda