**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?**

“Yo, we’re going out tonight, you coming?” asked my roommate, Charlie.

“Great idea! I’ll let you know” I said, knowing really well I would not.

You see, I was brought up rather comfortably. Lived in a good neighbourhood, had a healthy family, and enjoyed financial stability. Above all said luxuries, though, I knew I didn’t have much going on.

To no one’s surprise, moving into college was hard. The harsh truth is that being surrounded by 30,000+ breadgabbing students would easily succumb yourself to becoming a nobody, especially knowing that a night out invitation from your own roommate left you intimidated.

But unlike my upbringing, I want to experience new things. I wanted to grow not because I was given the opportunity to do so, but because I decided to.

So, I returned to my passions such as photography and soccer. Having enjoyed photography individually and soccer collectively, I felt joy being alone, but deeply cherished being around others. So I pursued the latter.

I joined 360 Energy, an initiative by Indonesian students studying in America, working towards solving Indonesia’s energy demands. Aspired in creating the first student-led hydropower in Indonesia, I found identity in working with people like me.

I knew the adjustment period would be tough. Hence, the slight dip in grades nearing the end of my freshman year. But as soon as I got up to speed, I was enjoying myself more than ever. My mindset towards my classes also changed for the better.

Hungry, I knew I could do so much better, especially for the community. I became the fundraiser for the Indonesian Student Association at San Diego. Throughout coordinated Indonesian-themed events, I led the association’s fundraising of over $1000 in just a few months. The monetary excess after the academic term would later be donated to San Diego’s communities in need.

Juggling between these organisations while maintaining academic proficiency is hard. But at least now I understand that change is possible and, certainly, is doable.