**What diversity issue do you feel most passionate about? How would you use this passion to**

**enrich Unity Council?**

The issue of ensuring that ethnic minorities feel socially included within the community is an issue that I feel quite strongly about. As a person of color, I have been witness to a number of offensive conversations almost weekly within social gatherings at SJS such as in the library during lunch or at sports practice after school. For example, my actions have sometimes been described in a racially insensitive manner within the context of Indian stereotypes. Too often, many feel that their comments are harmless jokes carrying no repercussions, when in reality these remarks can be quite hurtful towards many. While I have tried to seize every possible opportunity to explain the truth about such comments, I believe that my actions as a mere individual have been and will continue to be ineffective in addressing what appears to be an institutional issue within St. John’s.

Although this issue is in fact prevalent throughout the country, this fact should not permit us to not take action. As a member of Unity Council, I would advocate that Unity Council take advantage of the assembly periods on a monthly basis (or if not possible, at least a few times a semester) in order to discuss how to ensure all are included within the community while at the same time maintaining a degree of free speech. Such assemblies would be followed with advisory periods in which discussions among the students would supplement the lessons in assembly. I would be eager and willing to help plan such assemblies or advisory sessions regardless of whether I am accepted to the Unity Council.

**What is your understanding of Unity Council’s role in the SJS Upper School community?**

**What ways do you see Unity Council further strengthening our community?**

I believe that Unity Council’s role in the SJS Upper School community is to provide students with a direct line of communication with the Upper School administration and also to help educate the student population on pressing issues of inclusion both within SJS as well as in the nation as a whole. Both goals are equally important. The administration’s knowledge of the actual community present within the student body allows it to make efficient and impactful decisions regarding issues of diversity in order to empower the community. The education of the student body would almost certainly reduce levels of racism, sexism, and other forms of exclusions within the community, as these issues almost always stem from a fundamental ignorance of another group. I believe that it is important that Unity Council convey to the administration that education should be prioritized over discipline when possible in cases of discrimination within the student body, as discipline may discourage overt actions of racism, sexism, or homophobia, but it will not necessarily help the perpetrator of such actions to realize the error in their actions and correct their mindsets. It is for this reason that I believe Unity Council would be able to strengthen the community through educational assemblies such as those outlined in the answer to the previous question.

**Of the list of skill sets below, please select 1-2 with which you most align. Please give an**

**example of when you have exemplified this skill set.**

I most align with the community outreach and forum facilitator skill sets.

With regards to the community outreach skills, I have ample experience within the political realm of my own community outside of SJS. As a volunteer with Ben Rose’s campaign for state senator, I blockwalked and made phone calls to potential constituents in order to possibly sway their vote. Although they were complete strangers, I was able to comfortably converse with them. Currently, I am a board-member of Texas Students United, a student-led PAC started by myself and some other SJS students with the goal of supporting inclusionary policies at the state and local levels. In my position, I have coordinated with union leaders as well as other political organizations to mobilize volunteers and lobbyists.

With regards to the forum facilitator skill set, I have had speaking experience in various SJS groups. As a YLO officer, I have had many opportunities to help shape student discussions. For example, I served as a speaker at a JSA forum on gun control and helped run a YLO meeting about the importance of DACA. In both circumstances, I had to prepare much information and make sure that the views of all were heard and respected. Additionally, at Model UN conferences I have won a number of awards through leading groups of complete strangers to come to resolutions regarding a number of important issues such as climate change and the Syrian refugee crisis over the past few years. Because of these experiences, I believe I am qualified to help lead discussions of equally important issues of diversity.

**What do you anticipate your other time commitments (inside and outside of school) for the**

**2018-2019 school year to be? How will you balance academics, extracurriculars, and any**

**other commitments you may have? Please elaborate.**

Next year, I expect to take on some fine arts commitments such as the play, musical, and kantorei. I also will maintain my roles in the leadership of the Freethinker’s Club, the Microfinance Club, YLO, and the Philosophy Club and play active roles in those groups. While these activities may ostensibly appear to inhibit my taking on the important role of a leader in the Unity Council, I believe that I will be able to manage my time effectively for a number of reasons. For example, I have taken on the same schedule this year (in addition to a rigorous course schedule) and still have ample free time each day to devote to other activities I care about such as community service or engineering projects like OTC. Next year, I would be open to using my free time in other ways to aid Unity Council if necessary. Additionally, because I am a leader of most of the clubs in which I participate, I manage their schedules and as such can move events to make room for Unity Council meetings. Finally, while my fine arts roles may appear to take up a large chunk of my time, in reality this is not the case because kantorei only meets during school periods (but not my lunch period, which is almost always free), and the plays and musical do not overlap and only take up a short portion of the year. For these reasons, I am confident that I would be capable of playing an active role as a member of the Unity Council next year.