



example of a more specific aspect of Brown University. Being able to use the university's terminology demonstrates a level of familiarity with the school that admissions officers are likely to appreciate.

Mathew quotes his biology professor at Kent State University in support of the benefits of the interdisciplinary opportunities that Brown's open curriculum offers. This quote is one of the most compelling aspects of Mathew's essay. Not only does the quote convey a strong opinion, but it also tells us that Mathew is a precocious high school student who is already attending classes at the university level, and that he has listened carefully to his professor, whose words have served a mentoring role. Mathew might have chosen to explain his relationship to this professor in greater depth—especially if he knew the professor on a personal level—since this would also demonstrate that he listens during lectures and also takes the initiative to meet his teachers.

Mathew's hope that the open curriculum would allow him to surround himself with "individuals that are just as passionate about languages and sciences as [he is]" clearly highlights two aspects of the open curriculum he is particularly interested in: languages and science. Though his enthusiasm for science is evident from his opening paragraph, he might elaborate on why languages interest him. In general, it is best not to introduce major interests or themes at the end of essays, since this may leave readers with lingering questions and a sense of dissatisfaction that these were not answered.

“Leveraging Potential”

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THE FAMOUS GREEK MATHEMATICIAN ARCHIMEDES ONCE said, “Give me a lever long enough and a fulcrum on which to place it, and I shall move the world.” The basic principle of a lever is that as the length of a lever increases, the effort needed to be exerted to accomplish a task decreases. This fundamental law can also apply to life. Life's levers are experiences and opportunities that combine to motivate the individual to succeed. However, a lever is useless when forced upon an incorrectly placed fulcrum. Fulfilling oneself with passion and values is to build and place a strong and stable fulcrum. Without a passion for success, these opportunities and experiences become obsolete. Few find the correct balance between these variables and thus fail to reach their full potential. I, however, plan to be someone who finds that balance.



In an effort to build a successful lever for myself, I have searched for these experiences and opportunities all of my life. I have always had a passion for learning and a natural drive to succeed. At the beginning of my sophomore year in high school, I began to volunteer at a local, family owned zoo. This idea came from an innate passion for animals and an ongoing interest in science. At first, it was simply to complete a community service graduation requirement, but soon thereafter, I realized it was so much more. Work there was not like what most zoo volunteers experience. When other volunteers were following zookeepers and watching animals through cages at larger commercial zoos, I was spending nights “monkeysitting” my supervisor’s newborn Japanese snow macaque. However, calling it work solely alludes to labor. It was more of a life-altering, unique opportunity and provided me with the experience that clenched my decision to major in animal science.

Along with my passion for animals, I am also always looking for ways to challenge myself intellectually. I am an active member of my school’s Envirothon and Math teams and a Science Olympiad competitor. After high school, it has always been a goal of mine to attend an academically competitive university. A few years of researching brought me to Cornell’s College of Agriculture and Life Sciences (CALS). After attending the CALS open house and information lecture on the animal science department, I knew it was the perfect fit. One of the reoccurring themes of my conversations with students and professors alike was CALS dedication to shaping students into leaders.

With the experience I have gained in working at the zoo, I see myself emerging as a natural leader. Leaders are those few who do manage to balance the use of their “lever and fulcrum.” In high school, I also have worked my way to positions such as; NHS President, Steel Drums Ensemble President, and Student Representative to the School Board. Leadership roles like these are not something I plan to make the past after high school. In a school like CALS that has so many extracurricular activities to get involved in, I am sure obtaining positions similar to the ones I hold now would not be difficult. One of the clubs that I have seriously explored is the Pre-Vet Society. Veterinary School is something that I plan to pursue after college and hope to get involved in at the undergraduate level.

The building of a successful lever has only just begun for me. There is still so much that I have not seen or done. Life is full of opportunities



that can lead to great experiences, one of my greatest being volunteering at the Woodland Zoo. With all of the opportunities CALS has to offer, if given the chance to attend, I am certain that I would utilize every one; becoming not only an active member of the university, but a leader of tomorrow.

ANALYSIS

Cameron's essay revolves around the theme of a lever and fulcrum, which he references numerous times in order to demonstrate the balance that he strives to find in building a successful life. He introduces the lever and fulcrum with a memorable quote by Archimedes and then goes on to explain it in his own words. When using quotes from famous people in an essay, it is best to explicate the quote using one's own words, or explain why this quote is personally meaningful. Cameron does an excellent job of clearly explaining how the lever and fulcrum provide a metaphor for his life: "Fulfilling oneself with passion and values is to build and place a strong and stable fulcrum."

This metaphor makes for a clear life vision, which Cameron captures in his statement, "In an effort to build a successful lever for myself, I have searched for these experiences and opportunities all of my life." He then describes a number of these experiences and opportunities. The transition between the fulcrum/lever metaphor to the second paragraph in which he describes his experiences volunteering at a local zoo may seem a bit abrupt. Even so, Cameron's description of the zoo and his "monkeysitting" story are unusual and memorable, and they show us that Cameron is passionate about animal science.

The third paragraph begins to list numerous experiences in which Cameron has participated. This is appropriate for a resume or CV; but in essays, it is best not to list activities unless they are crucial to illustrating a bigger point. Compared to bullet-point lists, it is much harder in the essay narrative to remember activities when they lack the tie to a story line. In Cameron's essay, the Japanese snow macaque is more memorable than the list of accomplishments such as "NHS President, Steel Drums Ensemble President, and Student Representative to the School Board" because it is presented in a story-like way so that you can almost visualize Cameron as he "monkeysits" for his boss.

One theme that appears throughout Cameron's activities is his dedication to science; however, he unexpectedly emphasizes the leadership aspect of these experiences. The penultimate paragraph lists examples of Cameron's leadership experience, where again, highlighting a single activity might have been more effective. As a tie-in, Cameron refers back to his original metaphor in noting, "Leaders are those few who do manage to balance the use of their 'lever and