**UC Essay Prompt 1**

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

There I was… wet and tired… standing on the tallest podium… with my teammates… receiving our SHINY medals… Indonesia – ASEAN School Games (ASG) Grand Champion… This is undoubtedly one of my proudest moments, “We did it!! Go Team Indonesia!!”

Many believe swimming is an individual sport. I DISAGREE! It is as much of a team sport as soccer, basketball, and football even though we swim individually. Swimming, like all the other team sports, requires timing, strategy, finesse, teamwork, mental strength, and a team captain. and this is how we got our medals.

My reserved-self’s jaw was wide open, unable to close from the surprise when I was appointed team captain months prior. I was a stickler for discipline, but lack the bravery to lead. Nevertheless, I accepted the challenge. It was not an easy transition as I had to step up to the plate to become my team’s moral support, brainstorm strategies, and execute them. These were my new and exciting job upgrades as an athlete.

“Lucky no. 7 is the goal.” said coach as he held out seven fingers. My jaw was once again wide open. This time, so did everyone. We knew he meant the number of gold medals. Excited yet discouraged, clear yet confused, motivated yet desperate, our emotions were running wild with anxiety and our morale was low. Practices became mediocre as we were filled with negative thoughts. I knew that the team needed assurance immediately.

I took initiatives to ensure the success of our goal. Positive reinforcements, dry jokes, and team yell were some of the things I did to boost morale. To improve individual skills, I created performance versus stress level trends and personalized training plans. Lastly, performance data analysis and training simulations were done to develop the best winning strategy. With one joke and yell at a time; one training and vomiting routine at a time; one simulation at a time, we began to synergize into a faster and tougher team. And eventually, we became the victor with 10 gold medals.

“Leaders are meant to know everything.” was how I envisioned leadership, but not anymore. A leader is not supposed to pull everyone to the finish line from the front, but to push everyone together from the back and make sure none gets left behind. It is about encouragement, inspiration, and instilling vision for the team.