**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.**

At 6 a.m., the “Avengers” theme song woke me up full of spirit in my hotel room. Yes! I still can’t get over the shudder of “Avengers: Infinity Wars” ending. I got up, picked up my gym-bag, and “Assemble” the team at the lobby. Tensions and nerves were building up, much like the final seconds before Thanos snapped his fingers, as the team reminisce the coach’s seven fingers statement. Several Avenger-themed songs and cheesy yells later – they seemed to get the job done in cutting tensions, overcoming fears, and, ultimately, conquering the ASEAN School Games (ASG) 2018.

The seven fingers statement traced back a few months prior. Our “Jaws” were wide open – perhaps as wide as the length of Thanos’ fist – when we understood it meant SEVEN gold medals to win. Excited yet discouraged, motivated yet desperate, our emotions were running wild with anxiety and our morale was low. Practice became mediocre as we were filled with negative thoughts.

So I took initiatives to dispel these negativities and ensure the success of our goal. Experience and understanding of everyone’s strengths and weaknesses were, I believe, the reasons I was appointed team captain. I wrecked my brain trying to figure things out. First, the team tend to be easily discouraged – constant mood boosters are needed. Second, each member already has solid foundations – they just need to polish their skills and minimize the bad habits during the race. Third, most of them are lacking in stamina making them run out of steam towards the end of the race – stamina-improvement training menus and strategies need to be planned.

Uplifting songs, positive reinforcements, dry humor, and team chants were some of the things I did to boost morale. To improve individual skills, performance versus stress level trends and personalized training plans to overcome their bad habits were generated. Lastly, performance analysis, training simulations, and nutrition management were done to develop the best winning strategy.

One joke and chant 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.