**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. (346 words)**

During the pandemic, my 80-year old grandfather stayed home with strict precautionary measures and became highly lethargic. Some of my cousins insisted that he resume his daily activities as he did pre-COVID, while others maintained that he should wait it out. With 18 people talking all at once, we focused on pushing our own ideas, and the discussion gradually turned into heated arguments and finally a  shouting match.

After a week of not talking to one another, I couldn’t bear the suspense any longer. As the second eldest in the family, I felt the responsibility to take action and reunite my 17 cousins. I called a meeting with all of them and communicated that we must be solid and work as a team towards our common goal -- keeping grandfather active. The call started tense; and I apologized to my cousins for not listening to their opinions. It broke the tension, and my cousins started to apologize to one another. During the call, I made sure that everyone got the opportunity to share their opinions without getting interrupted, and I highlighted the positive aspects of each side’s arguments. Voicing opinions is great but listening to each other’s ideas is equally critical.

We agreed that our grandfather’s mental health is as important as his physical health. Thus, we started to add to one another’s ideas instead of shooting them down. Together, we decided to organize a virtual family competition in which we did at-home exercises with increasing difficulty. As a result, my grandfather’s health and mood improved.

This experience taught me that, in a large group, friction is inevitable, but we must put our egos aside to achieve compromise for the greater good. As a leader, I have learned the importance of active listening to better understand others’ motives. At UC, I will continue to empathize with my peers and improve my communication skills, whether it be in the Recreational Sports Program or in the Asian Students Societies. There will always be disagreements in a large group. But when we stick together, we can overcome any obstacle.