

## **Leadership UC Statements**

### **Food Bank**

I was part of making silent history at our school this past year. As a part of the Community Outreach Committee of Leadership Class, I contacted the local Food Bank and together with the help of the student body, donated over 600 pounds of canned food for Thanksgiving. Noticing a bulk of unused VHS tapes in our school's basement, I did some research and discovered that discarding these are harmful for the environment. I found an organization that employs people with disabilities to recycle these tapes, and soon our school shipped over 400 VHS tapes to their warehouse in Missouri. We received overwhelming gratification from them as no other school, even in their own community, had done something like that. Watching a small grassroots initiative in our community benefit people I was unlikely to ever meet made me feel connected to the world at large and showed me the power of putting actions to your words.

As a member of Leadership, I have also spent countless hours preparing for and facilitating New Student Orientation, Homecoming, and Grad Night, among many other programs. Seeing a gap in our care of the student body, I also expanded the New Student Lunches Program to include not just freshman, but all new transfers, regardless of grade level.

Leadership is my own personal critic. It forces me to constantly weigh the pros and cons of how I carry myself, how I speak, and how I listen at every single event we put on for the student body. It has taught me to look objectively and weigh the wants and needs of every student. It has shown me the importance of listening, not just hearing.

Leadership is the ability to make each student a part of something so much bigger than themselves. It holds me accountable and keeps me engaged with my fellow humans even when I'm exhausted. It has allowed me to leave a legacy of purpose. Through vulnerability in times of stress and joy in times of celebration, grooming myself into a better leader has also made me a better student, friend, and daughter.

### **Officer Cadet School**

I am twenty years old and I already have kids. Well, 30 actually, and they're all around my age, some even older.

After a brief few months of training I was posted to Officer Cadet School as an instructor. It was my job to shape and mold them; I was ready to attempt everything I'd learned about being a leader and serve my new cadets to the best of my abilities. I trained my cadets by encouraging teamwork and learning, trying to somehow make the harsh military training fun. I became very close to them in the process.

Leadership was enjoyable until I discovered one of my cadets had cheated on a test. In the military, cheating is resolved with an immediate trip to the detention barracks. Considered worse than jail, the record leaves a permanent mark. If I pressed charges, that's where my cadet would end up.

My heart sank. He was also my friend.

After much deliberation, I decided there was only one resolution. I could not, with good conscience, let this go. It would set precedence for the rest of my cadets. It was painful and brought a few tears, but I could not show any wavering or doubt, at least not in front of them. I charged him, and he went to the detention barracks and eventually was discharged. The acceptance I had felt from my cadets was replaced with fear.

I found leadership is not all about making friends and having others listen to orders. The rest of my platoon learned, and didn't repeat the mistake. While I was never again "one of the guys," I found pride in the growth of my team. A few weeks later I ran into my old cadet. Despite his hardship, he acknowledged his responsibility and the experience had motivated him as he struggled to recreate his life.

## **Robotics Club**

As president of the Robotics Club, I find building the robots and creatively solving technical problems to be the easy tasks. What's difficult and brings more meaning to my work is steering the club itself.

After three years of battling the geeky-male stereotype our club was labelled with, I evolved our small club of 5 techies into a thriving interdisciplinary hub of 80 distinct personalities. Because our club lacks a professional instructor, I not only teach members about STEM related jargons that I learned from hundreds of Google searches, but also encourage constructive debates ranging from topics like Proportional-Integral-Derivative Error Correction Algorithm to how someone should fix her mom's vacuum cleaner. In this way, I provide beginners with an atmosphere that reflects my own mentality: proactive listening without moralization or judgement.

I also like sharing insights outside the club. In my mathematics class, for example, I sometimes incite intense discussions during lectures on abstruse topics like vectors or calculus by offering examples from my experiences in the lab. In this manner, I not only become an integral part of the intellectual vitality of STEM-related classes at school, but also show people with all kinds of interests and backgrounds how to employ technical intuition when solving problems and, in some cases, I even inspire students to join the Robotics Club.

As an introverted leader, I try to listen first, and use my soft-spoken attentiveness to invite dialogue that improves team chemistry. With this ability, I have learnt to control the momentum of official debates and basketball matches. Thus, whether my team wins or loses, the external pressure of either suffering a setback or enjoying an achievement rarely affects my team's composure, which helps us maintain our consistency and resolve.

As I visualize myself building projects with a group of coders in the future, I believe that my discreteness, experience in robotics, practical tenacity and absolute love for innovating technology will be vital for all my endeavors.