The reason I am interested in pursuing a high distinction in leadership is to help others in ways that I was not. In my family I was the first one who went to college, in fact, I was the first one that finished high-school within the standard 4 years. Towards the end of my senior year, I started to fill out applications for colleges. I was very confused as to what I was supposed to be doing, I had little to no help from my family, and I was too ashamed to ask my peers for help. I want to earn a high distinction in leadership in order to help others avoid the same perils that I went through as a senior and even some that I am still going through right now as a freshman. In turn, I want to pursue a high distinction in leadership to make a difference in the lives of others.

Unlike most students at my high-school, I did not have the luxury of not having a job, I worked as a contractor for a real-estate company to help save up for my education. While I did not necessarily like the job I was working, I learned a lot from it, the one thing I learned that has stuck with me to this day is that I never wanted to do construction work again. This made me realize that the only way I could get out of doing this for the rest of my life, was to get a quality education. I worked hard to get my foot in the door at any company that was hiring. Finally, I landed an internship at the Waterford Institute, which was a substantial upgrade from my previous job. There my hard work ethic and determination earned me a part-time position as a Marketing Assistant Manager. I learned from all of my colleagues that there is more to life than money and a degree. I learned that there are various distinctions one must make for themselves if they want to be successful. I believe that the LEAD programs can help me distinguish myself from others that are similar to me and help me push past them in every aspect of my life. I know that this program has done amazing things for some of my other classmates and I hope that it can help me excel in my personal, educational, and professional endeavors.

I believe that I offer a unique amount of skills and abilities that I can add to the LEAD program. For one, I am a first-generation student that has been able to maintain a 3.8 GPA for my first year in college. I believe that the experiences I have gone through as a moderately successful first-generation student can help other first-generation students feel empowered the same way I do. I am also bi-lingual, I grew up my entire life speaking two languages and I have a love for my own Spanish culture and helping others with the same background. I am holding an Assistant Management position at a nonprofit educational research center, I believe that my real-world professional experience can help others get their foot in the door in professional settings. I have also served as a varsity captain for the sport of football, I believe I can use these skills to help lead others to a more successful future.

A few years ago I served as the First Assistant to my Bishop for the Church of Jesus Christ and Latter Day Saints. Part of my calling was to lead the rest of my quorum as well as the younger quorums such as Teachers and Deacons. We decided as a group that we wanted to venture to the Bloomington Caves out in Southern Utah. I had never been, but another adult in our ward had been previously so he volunteered to help us. As we explored these caves, I noticed a low-hanging stalactite and warned the others in our group that were following. However, evidently, I was not loud enough and the adult in charge pierced his head open on the sharp rock. At the time I knew that it was my obligation as a leader to assess the situation and formulate a plan. I knew that we had to move fast because it was apparent that this person needed medical attention. I realized that we were too far into the cave to head backward, so we had to make a last-ditch effort to push through the rest of the cave. I assured everyone that we would be okay and that I would carry the adult until we reached the opening of the cave. It took 8 young men to help navigate through the cave and assist this adult to ensure he was okay. Thankfully we made it out and brought him to safety. Afterward, the young men told me that they were extremely grateful for my leadership and that without me they would have panicked more. I believe that leadership is an important quality for everyone to demonstrate at one time or another, and I believe that the LEAD program can help me develop my leadership qualities.

Ever since I was young, I have struggled with my weight. I knew that I came from a "large" family, but I never looked at myself as any different than most other kids. It wasn't until I started school that I knew it was going to be an issue. Kids started making fun of me, I didn't know if it was because they didn't like me, or because they didn't know any better, or if it was just out of pure spite. This lasted until my junior year of high-school. I knew I wanted to make a change in my life for the better. I started working out, and I started eating properly. I was able to lose about 80 pounds in 4 months. It took some time but I finally saw the changes I wanted in my body. However, everyone around me said that they had been prevalent for so long. This is when I started to realize I had a problem. I started drastically under-eating, to the point where my body was in starvation mode. I still wasn't happy with my body, and I knew that it wasn't healthy. I realized that I had body-image issues, that the years of being made fun of had deprecated my self-image. I spent the next year trying to be more comfortable and happy with how I looked. Finally, at the end of my senior year, I was able to look at myself in the mirror and not be ashamed. This took a copious amount of therapy, and self-improvement, but in the end it was worth all the suffering.