

UC College Application Essay Examples

Prompt: Beyond what has already been shared in your application, what do you believe makes you stand out as a strong candidate for admissions to the University of California?

Hunger. Flames licking my face. Thirst. Unknown creatures circling me restlessly. Aching. The darkness threatening to swallow me. Desperation. I asked for this.

Nine long days in the jungle with only a day's worth of rations, the Jungle Confidence Course was designed to test our survival capabilities. To make matters worse, I had to carry a bunch of heavy military equipment that had no use to me for the purpose of the test. Dropped in the middle of Brunei, no matter which way you walked the terrain always went up. So why on earth would anyone volunteer this?

I was hungry. Not in the physical sense, even though I was starving for those nine days, but rather due to an incurable thirst. Every Singaporean male citizen is required to serve two years in service to the country essentially delaying our education and subsequent entrance into the workforce. Most people, including my friends, see this as something terrible and try to avoid it altogether by flying overseas. Others look for the easiest and most cushiony job to serve during the two long years rather than be another military grunt.

As for me, since I had to do it why not do the best I can and hope to benefit from it? I've been hungry, cold, exhausted beyond the point of belief, yet I'm still standing. I sacrificed lots of free time, lost friends, ended up missing lots of key family moments due to training but I don't regret a thing. Helicopter rides, urban warfare, assaulting beaches, all in a day's work. Movies became reality accomplishing tasks once impossible.

Aspiration drove me then, and still continues to pilot me now. All these experiences and memories create a lasting impact, creating pride and the motivation to continue forward. I could have given up at any point during those long nine days, but with every pang of hunger I made myself focus on what I wanted.

To be the best version of myself possible, and come out of this challenge stronger than ever before. What's the point of living life if you have nothing to be proud of?