

# Cornell University

- Accepted College Essay -

## ALL WORTH IT

He's in my arms, the newest addition to the family. I'm too overwhelmed. "That's why I wanted you to go to Bishop Loughlin," she says, preparing baby bottles. "But ma, I chose Tech because I wanted to be challenged." "Well, you're going to have to deal with it," she replies, adding, "Your aunt watched you when she was in high school." "But ma, there are three of them. It's hard!"

returning home from a summer program that cemented intellectual and social independence to find a new baby was not exactly thrilling. Add him to the toddler and seven-year-old sister I have and there's no wonder why I sing songs from Blue's Clues and The Backyardigans instead of sane seventeen-year-old activities. It's never been simple; as a female and the oldest, I'm to significantly rear the children and clean up the shabby apartment before an ounce of pseudo freedom reaches my hands. If I can manage to get my toddler brother onto the city bus and take him home from day care without snot on my shoulder, and if I can manage to take off his coat and sneakers without demonic screaming for no apparent reason, then it's a good day. Only, waking up at three in the morning to work, the only free time I have, is not my cup of Starbucks.

We were already different at age fourteen. She gave birth to me and went to an alternative high school; I established closeness with new friends in a competitive high school. She and my then present father were taking care of me; I was studying the environmental effects on the onset of schizophrenia. She took her daughter to preschool, and I vowed to never let anything get in the way of my academics. Even though I'm taking courses that prepare me for a career in the medical field, a path I would not pursue even at risk of spontaneous combustion of Earth, there is no excuse for me to fail. After all, my family has a reputation for failure, and if I don't push myself, no one else will. When I think of me not choosing the effortless Bishop Loughlin High School and traditional fun with friends and preferring the intense courses, dedication to achievement, and overall feeling of self-worth, I cannot believe my mother still can't accept my choice.

One thing I've learned growing up in Brooklyn is that disappointment happens often. The bike I rode to school in the morning wasn't there when I went to get it in the afternoon. That's Brooklyn. Instead of seeing movies with friends on weekends, I work hard and attempt to keep the little kids out of my mom's hair. That's Brooklyn. Instead of going outside to my backyard, I remember I don't have one, and settle for the 12' by 6' concrete space in front of my house. That's Brooklyn. My Brooklyn doesn't feature flowers of the freshest air or people who smile and say hi. Instead, there's what might have been Orbit gum on the floor among the other thousand wads, a pool of strangely colored vomit, and the monotonous working class boarding the subway to the job it will complain about when it returns home.

If there's anything that Brooklyn has taught me, it's "just do it." I owe it to myself to keep trying, not because I have to, but because I want to prove to myself that I can. I'll have to endure the requirements of helping to raise my siblings and other responsibilities. After the chaos and traffic and noise have settled, I know I've made the right choice, even if my mother hasn't. And it's all worth it.

## LEVERAGING POTENTIAL

The famous Greek mathematician Archimedes once said, “give me a lever long enough and a fulcrum on which to place it, and I shall move the world.” The basic principle of a lever is that as the length of a lever increases, the effort needed to be exerted to accomplish a task decreases. This fundamental law can also apply to life. Life’s levers are experiences and opportunities that combine to motivate the individual to succeed. However, a lever is useless when forced upon an incorrectly placed fulcrum. Fulfilling oneself with passion and values is to build and place a strong and stable fulcrum. Without a passion for success, these opportunities and experiences become obsolete. Few find the correct balance between these variables and thus fail to reach their full potential. I, however, plan to be someone who finds that balance.

In an effort to build a successful lever for myself, I have searched for these experiences and opportunities all of my life. I have always had a passion for learning and a natural drive to succeed. At the beginning of my sophomore year in high school, I began to volunteer at a local, family owned zoo. This idea came from an innate passion for animals and an ongoing interest in science. At first, it was simply to complete a community service graduation requirement, but soon thereafter, I realized it was so much more. Work there was not like what most zoo volunteers experience. When other volunteers were following zookeepers and watching animals through cages at larger commercial zoos, I was spending nights “monkeysitting” my supervisor’s newborn Japanese snow macaque. However, calling it work solely alludes to labor. It was more of a life-altering, unique opportunity and provided me with the experience that clenched my decision to major in animal science.

Along with my passion for animals, I am also always looking for ways to challenge myself intellectually. I am an active member of my school’s Envirothon and Math teams and a Science Olympiad competitor. After high school, it has always been a goal of mine to attend an academically competitive university. A few years of researching brought me to Cornell’s College of Agriculture and Life Sciences (CALS). After attending the CALS open house and information lecture on the animal science department, I knew it was the perfect fit. One of the reoccurring themes of my conversations with students and professors alike was CALS dedication to shaping students into leaders.

With the experience I have gained in working at the zoo, I see myself emerging as a natural leader. Leaders are those few who do manage to balance the use of their “lever and fulcrum.” In high school, I also have worked my way to positions such as; NHS President, Steel Drums Ensemble President, and Student representative to the School Board. Leadership roles like these are not something I plan to make the past after high school. In a school like CALS that has so many extracurricular activities to get involved in, I am sure obtaining positions similar to the ones I hold now would not be difficult. One of the clubs that I have seriously explored is the Pre-Vet Society. veterinary School is something that I plan to pursue after college and hope to get involved in at the undergraduate level.

The building of a successful lever has only just begun for me. There is still so much that I have not seen or done. Life is full of opportunities that can lead to great experiences, one of my greatest being volunteering at the Woodland Zoo. With all of the opportunities CALS has to offer, if given the chance to attend, I am certain that I would utilize every one; becoming not only an active member of the university, but a leader of tomorrow

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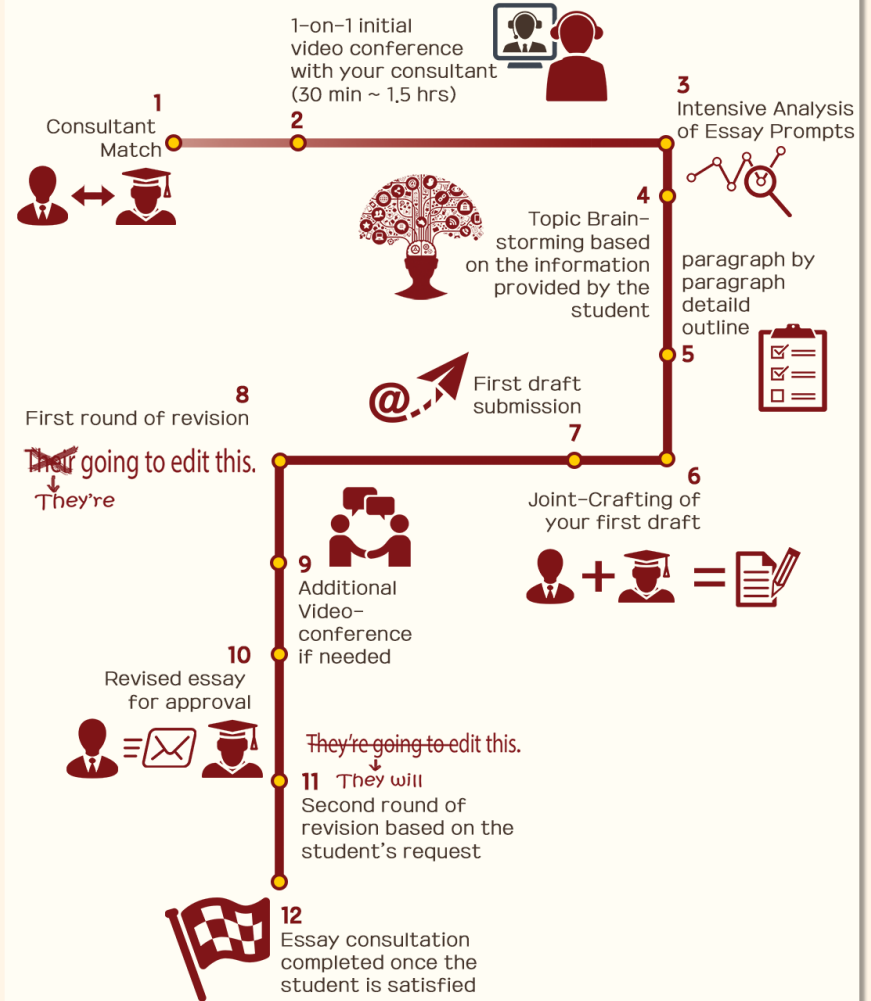
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