

A position in the student leadership team is an opportunity I would cherish for years to come, not only for the skills and experience I would inherit, but also for the legacy of positive impact I could leave behind. It is not something I desire simply as fodder to bulk up my CV. It is a vision I have had for myself since I started at Whitchurch High School, aged 11.

Student voice has been a keen interest of mine since year 7; I have actively been concerned with the issues of the school community, acting as form representative at student forum and SIG meetings throughout key stages 3, 4, and 5. My contributions made a significant impact upon our school: I proposed fundraising as a method of financing the school's ability to recycle and collaborated with fellow form reps to introduce more engaging, relatable reflection time content.

Meanwhile, a highlight of this academic year has been my participation in the Cambridge Biology Challenge, in which my team won 4 distinctions, 3 badges of merit, and an invitation to a selective, in-person awards event at the University of Cambridge. The challenge saw my teammate and I research in depth, and create an engaging, informative response to a different biology-related prompt, every month.

Aside from the academic reward, my aptitude for leadership shone through. The ideas and opinions of my teammates were always very important to me. I regularly set realistic milestones for our projects, allocated equal responsibilities to members of the team, gave clear guidance and support when it was needed, and made critical decisions where appropriate.

I am indebted to my Drama GCSE for teaching me the value of collaboration with others. The qualification was brilliant in developing my ability to compromise and work with a range of people, better empathising with my peers and their needs. I was taught to approach new ideas with an open mindset and be more excited about stepping out of my comfort zone. I believe the student leadership team would be an excellent environment for me to put the skills I learnt into practice, working as part of a diverse team and throwing myself into new situations to generate lasting solutions for future cohorts.

I am also a member of Interact, as part of which I have collectively brainstormed fundraising ideas (e.g. donating Christmas shoebox gifts to charities in our local community), created posters for a range of events, and helped to obtain and deliver donations around the school and the local community. Many responsibilities are undertaken at short notice – strong teamwork and communication skills have been vital in the role.

Studying 3 AS and an A2 subject, participating in the Cambridge Biology Challenge, and being an enthusiastic member of Interact was time-consuming. It was essential that I managed my time responsibly, to ensure I could engage in super/extracurricular activities, practice hobbies, and maintain good wellbeing, all while keeping on top of my schoolwork. I

feel that, as a result, I possess the robust time management and organisational skills required by a successful lead student.

I am mostly eager to build on and work with the ideas of my peers. However, some of my own goals are as follows: a rethink of the GCSE options advice currently provided by the school, an increase in charity initiatives and volunteering opportunities, and a happier, more inspired school environment by the implementation of more green space around the site. These are outlined in greater detail my accompanying video.