



SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENT



Marvin Whyte

NOMINATION CODE: JC-SGMRP-062883

UNIVERSITY: University of the West Indies, Mona

MAJOR: Law

ESSAY

Calm Under Pressure

Prompt: Describe a moment when you demonstrated leadership or discipline under pressure, and explain how that experience has shaped your goals, either academically or as a member of the Schools' Challenge Quiz team.

“Leadership is not about appearing fearless or having every answer. It is about creating stability when others feel uncertain.”

With only seconds remaining in the final round of an inter-school quiz match, our team was trailing by ten points. The auditorium was filled with noise, but at our table, the tension felt even louder. One teammate was discouraged after answering a question incorrectly, while another had begun responding too quickly. As team captain, I knew that our greatest challenge was no longer the opposing team; it was remaining disciplined under pressure.

During the brief pause before the next question, I reminded my teammates of the strategy we had practised: listen carefully, trust our preparation, and communicate before giving an answer whenever the rules allowed. I spoke calmly, although I was nervous myself, because I understood that my attitude would influence the entire team. Instead of blaming anyone for our mistakes, I encouraged everyone to treat the remaining questions as a fresh start.

The next question was in science, one of my strongest areas. I felt an immediate urge to answer, but I forced myself to listen to the entire question. That moment of patience mattered. A phrase near the end changed what was being asked, and I was able to give the correct response. My teammates then answered two more questions correctly, allowing us to take the lead and win the match by a narrow margin.

Although I was proud of the victory, the most important lesson came from how we achieved it. I learned that leadership is not about appearing fearless or having every answer. It is about creating stability when others feel uncertain. A good leader controls personal emotions, helps people recover from mistakes, and keeps the group focused on its shared purpose. I also discovered that discipline often appears in small decisions: waiting before speaking, following a strategy, and choosing encouragement instead of criticism.

That experience has shaped both my academic goals and my approach to the Schools' Challenge Quiz team. Academically, I now study more consistently instead of depending on last-minute preparation. I divide difficult subjects into manageable areas, review my errors, and practise answering questions within a limited time. My goal is not simply to earn high grades but to develop the knowledge, judgment, and composure needed to solve challenging problems.

As a quiz team member, I hope to become someone my teammates can rely on, especially during demanding moments. I want to strengthen our preparation, encourage respectful communication, and help younger members build confidence. The match taught me that pressure does not automatically weaken a team; when met with discipline and steady leadership, it can reveal what the team is truly capable of.