

## The Search for More

by Brennan Lee

As a sophomore in high school, I felt something was missing. I was academically and socially sound with a decent GPA and a great group of friends, but I still had this feeling that there was more.

I thought I would find happiness by becoming a glorified nerd-athlete with a stellar GPA and some killer calves, only to get cut from the varsity soccer team in the second to the last round of cuts. So then I was lost, confused even. I didn't know what could possibly fill this void. Something was missing, and I was still searching for my missing piece.

Around junior year, I met my school's Student Activity Coordinator. It was then that I discovered student council. I thought, "Why not?" With little-to-no leadership experience, I applied for a position as the Board of Education ("BOE") Student Member. I honestly did not know what I was getting myself into. So there I was—a naïve 17 year-old boy—with no drivers license, getting a ride from his mother to his interview.

It gets worse.

I was 15 minutes late, with a crinkled button-up shirt and some beige jeans that I thought were more professional than regular bluejeans, planning-out my entire interview with a ballpoint pen and a neglected notepad that was secretly stashed in the glove compartment of my mom's van. Thank goodness.

So then I show-up. I was slightly underprepared, and late—which was basically a death sentence. I was scheduled to get interviewed second, but I wasn't there. They took the third interviewee instead and I anxiously waited, feeling already defeated.

I honestly thought I had little chance of snatching this position, and since my mom drove all this way for my interview, I thought I should have a little fun. I wasn't nervous at

all, and the interview felt more like a conversation and discussion of ideas than a regimented question and response.

So yeah, I totally nailed it and ended-up getting the gig. Woohoo! A day later, I realized that I actually got the job, and my happiness turned to stress. What did I get myself into?

Reflecting back on my year, I faced many challenges. I was missing school for BOE meetings, and taking seven classes including AP Biology, AP Calculus, AP Statistics and human anatomy. But through the struggle, enlightenment came.

I am so lucky to have met lifelong friends that were part of Hawaii State Student Council, and Mrs. Frias—the queen bee of the Hawaii State Student Council ("HSSC"). And I am so fortunate to have been given so many opportunities. A few of which I've experienced are listed below:

- Student Leadership Conference ("SLC")
- Secondary Student Conference ("SSC")
- Children's Youth Summit ("CYS")
- Every Student Succeeds Act ("ESSA") Task Force

Each year is different from the last, so every BOE Student Member experience is not the same as the one prior. Things come-up and you will have to do your best to jump on board.

This is the analogy I always use. Pretend a treadmill is running at its fastest speed and you are standing in front on it, waiting for the right moment to jump on. Eventually you'll realize there is no right moment and you take a leap of fate. If you fly off, you jump back on. And if you still fall, you keep trying until you learn to run.

It's going to be a challenge, but coming from an applicant with no leadership experience on the BOE, HSSC, or even my class council for that matter—it is definitely possible.

Social aptitude and strong written and oral communication skills are important for this job; but more importantly, it takes determination and constant reflection to ultimately succeed.

Best of luck, young grasshopper.