

HAPEVILLE CHARTER CAREER ACADEMY STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

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I am a Leadership Enterprise for a Diverse America scholar, and I attended this organization's summer program at Princeton University.

Throughout the summer institute, I took college guidance, writing instruction, SAT preparatory, and Aspects of Leadership classes. I enjoyed these classes because I was able to develop skills that would prepare me to succeed at a highly selective institution. For instance, my peers and I engaged in academic discussions and constructive argumentation over the course of the seven-week program. We sat in a circle with our facilitators and discussed our beliefs and stances on contemporary issues, such as the limitations of freedom of speech, human rights, mass incarceration, the "white washing of history" and its curriculum, immigration, the intersectionality of certain disadvantaged groups, and the differences between leadership and authority. Although my stances on certain issues differed from that of my peers, they were all willing to challenge and to defend my beliefs. These discussions have not only challenged my perspective, but they have also prompted me to question my style of leadership as well as the methods that I use to execute my leadership endeavors.



While I enjoyed participating in academic discussions with some of the most intelligent people that I have ever met, I was amazed by the guidance I received from the program's faculty. I found it incredible that my writing instructor as well as the director of college pathways were always willing to assist me with my research assignment. This assignment was quite challenging because I was required to formulate a research question that I would use to complete a formal research proposal. After I was taught how to navigate the Princeton library's extensive databases, I created a research proposal that explained the complex factors that have contributed to the gender segregation that exists in various STEM undergraduate majors. It was simply thrilling to read, examine, and critique scholarly journals on this topic. I will never forget the excitement that I felt as I presented my research to my peers.

Furthermore, this experience was so valuable because I was able to network and to form a community with ninety-nine other scholars. We all live in a total of thirty-two different states, yet we all greatly care for one another and encourage each other to persevere through personal hardships. It was amazing to hear my peers speak about their joys and sorrows during our conversations and our community meetings. They were all very encouraging and respectful when I or others explained our beliefs. Our core values are excellence, compassion, integrity, and community, and I definitely believe that these values have influenced my outlook on the world. As a result of the encouragement and the knowledge that I have gained from my new community, I now strive to be President of the United States.