

I think a college education is important because attending college allows one to grow intellectually, emotionally and socially, and in doing so, prepare oneself to be a healthy and productive citizen. College is a unique environment where a young person can define and refine one's identity while learning the hard and soft skills that will help one navigate and contribute to the "real world." When I first began to contemplate going to college, I was not sure that I wanted to attend an HBCU; however, after visiting Hampton's beautiful and historic campus, I am confident that Hampton University is the perfect environment for me to learn, grow, and continue to define myself as a young black woman. When I visited Hampton I was impressed at how much it felt like a family atmosphere—all of the students were very welcoming and really made me feel like I was already part of the Hampton family. Along with the family atmosphere, Hampton's outstanding academic programs are equally impressive, especially the nursing program that I aspire to enter. I am confident that the close knit Hampton University community is big enough for me to explore various interests and continue to blossom without the worry of becoming a number or another face in the crowd.

Although I will be entering college a year early, I think the qualities such as commitment, leadership, discipline, responsibility, accountability, and teamwork that I have learned and developed since joining my first track team have well prepared me to excel in college and be an outstanding member of the Hampton University community. These qualities were incredibly

useful as I learned to manage the many demands and constraints that being a highly competitive student-athlete placed on my time. Learning to successfully balance school work, practice and training, and competitions was a struggle at times but one that I believe I managed well, as I am graduating an entire year early from high school and I have been accepted into very prestigious universities such as Hampton University.

In addition to achieving my full potential as a student, I look forward to continuing to define and develop my identity as a confident but humble young black woman. I am also eagerly anticipating learning from the diverse group of peers at Hampton with whom I plan to form a strong connection. I hope to inspire my fellow students and together, build a strong support network that will help us overcome the academic, emotional, and social challenges that will present themselves during our college experience. Knowing and being able to trust that there is a strong network of students, faculty, and alumni who are supportive and fully invested in your success and well-being is the nurturing environment that I look forward to experiencing and contributing to at my soon to be Home by the Sea!