



HAMPTON-NEWPORT NEWS
ACHIEVEMENT FOUNDATION

2023 SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS TESTIMONIALS AND ADVICE

Knylah Sykes, Howard University

My name is Knylah Sykes, graduated from Bethel High School, now attending Howard University. I am a Nursing major with a GPA of a 3.76 after completing my first semester. So far, I have only joined HU Nursing Club which exposes me to more opportunities around my school in my major. It also gave me the opportunity to be able to get a mentor who guides me in every positive direction she can. College wasn't a hard transition but it wasn't easy either. Honestly, it was more of an adjustment. To be in an environment where you are unfamiliar with can cause a lot of uncertainty. I had to branch out and meet new faces so that we could adjust together. Affirm yourself and your life everyday, always stay busy and active, etc. The advice I would give a graduating senior is to always keep your head in the game! Remember what you are in college for! Don't let the activities and the fun deteriorate you from what you are there to accomplish. It will be very easy to go out and have fun which is amazing, but don't get left behind. Prioritizing is my biggest advice! High school did not prepare me for the course load that I receive at Howard. Bethel was what I like to

call, "a breeze". Howard will definitely make me work extremely hard to accomplish my dreams as a traveling registered nurse. Never give up on yourself has been my affirmation this whole semester.

Clarence Bostic, Hampton University.

Hello my name is Clarence Bostic, I am attending Hampton University and I went to Grafton High school last year. I am a Cybersecurity Major with a dual minor in Business and AI. I currently have a 3.5 GPA, I've joined the Men's caucus, the chess club, Cyber league team, and NESBE.

To me college was a pretty easy transition it was hard to get used to each teachers teaching habits and tests but after you can get pretty used to everything. My advice to any graduating senior is that school has prepared you for this, so don't doubt your own ability but in the same breath don't expect to be coddled. To a degree I think my high school did prepare me, just because it offered dual enrollment. Take your time while you are now an adult and can do things doesn't mean you should.

Jenny Calderon, University of Virginia

My name is Jenny Calderon and I am currently enrolled at the University of Virginia. I went to York High School in Yorktown, VA.

My current GPA is a 3.85, my major is Foreign Affairs, and my minor is Spanish. The organizations that I have joined include Air Force ROTC, Central Americans for Empowerment, Fuego Dance Team, and the Organization for Young Filipino Americans. College was a fairly easy transition for me, as I knew what to expect going in, and I had kept a very open mind. I missed home a lot the first month of college, but after that, it was pretty smooth sailing. I think my dual enrollment English class was the only high school class that prepared me well for college.

The advice that I would give to any senior graduating this fall is this: it may be rough the first few weeks, the first month, the first year. But you are going to be okay. Be patient with your peers, because they are going through the same things that you are. Be kind to yourself, because you are going to experience and feel so many different things you never have before. But always know that you are going to be okay in the end, and that you are going to learn so so much.

I hope this information helps.

Zion Rainey, Norfolk State University

I attend Norfolk State University. I am a Mass Communications major and I have been great! This first semester, having a big transition from high school has been a little struggle for me as well as having a lot of other things going on in my life. However, my eco so far has been amazing and I plan on to keep going! I have joined the NSU Lacrosse team and I also am an influencer making videos and interviews around campus! I do apologize for sending this email so late I have been very busy

lately! I thank you so much for your help financially it has helped me tremendously! I do ask a favor if you don't mind, if there are any opportunities for me to interview anyone or for me to expand my following on media I ask that you would please let me know! Media and entertainment is my passion in life! I thank you so much again! Much love.

Taj Adkins Jr, Norfolk State University

I'm Taj Adkins Jr and I graduated from Heritage High School in 2023. I am now a first year student at Norfolk State University. My major is computer science and I have a 4.0 GPA after my first semester. The transition from high school to college wasn't that difficult because I had family and friends that helped me make that move. I have enjoyed my time so far at NSU and have meet lots of new people. My high school math class did prepare me for my math course this semester. I would tell the new graduating seniors that once you get to campus, make sure you pick the right group to hang with, as having the right circle can take you far in life. Thank you again.

Selah Longchamp, North Carolina A&T

My name is Selah Longchamp and I attended Bethel High School. I attend North Carolina A&T as a business information technology student and I finished with a 4.0 GPA. I am currently in three organizations: Noble Brothers and Sisters, 100 Collegiate Women, and Ladies of Excellence. Through these organizations I have gained over 25 hours of community service this semester. For me, college wasn't a hard transition at all, I actually enjoy the freedom and independence. Moving in was pretty hard for me because I did not have a support system, I had to move in myself. That alone showed me how much harder I need to work in life. My biggest advice to high seniors that even if my tuition is fully paid for, continue to apply to scholarships. My refund check was how I was able to provide for myself this semester because I do not have any family that checks on me or assists me in anything pertaining to college. As of right now, my high school curriculum helped me in three of my classes. Due to the knowledge I had acquired in high school, a lot of my first semester was just review for me.

Justin Claiborne, Norfolk State University

My name is Justin Claiborne, and I graduated from Bethel High School with a 3.7 GPA. I am currently enrolled at Norfolk State University as a cybersecurity major with a 3.5 GPA. In my first semester, I was primarily focused on my school work and didn't participate in any clubs or organizations. Not joining any clubs allowed me to focus on school and I ended up being accepted in the DNIMAS honors scholarship at Norfolk State University. Transitioning from high school to college was not a drastic change for me. The key, as I discovered, is to go to class everyday and stay focused on academics. While the workload may increase, the freedom and responsibility that come with college life require a proactive approach to time management.

To graduating seniors entering college this fall, I would advise don't be afraid to step out of your comfort zone, join clubs, and meet new people. Building a network of friends and mentors can greatly enhance your college experience. Reflecting on my own experience, I would say that my high school curriculum did provide a solid foundation, especially in the technical aspects of my major. However, college introduced me to a different level of difficulty and complexity, emphasizing more of the actual subject and the importance of critical thinking and independent learning.

Jahmir Callahan, North Carolina A&T

My name is Jahmir Callahan, a Phoebus High School Graduate. I am an Honors Freshman Chemical Engineering major attending North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University. My GPA is 3.86.

Going to college, especially an HBCU, has been a unique experience. It is empowering to see people who look like me and are just as intelligent and determined as me to impact our world. High school has prepared me academically for College; however, socially, it is a very different story. Even though I am just a freshman, I have learned many life lessons to aid me in the future. Every day, there is an opportunity to network, meet new people, and learn more about my college and culture. Being a member of the National Society of Black Engineers, the American Institute of Chemical Engineers, the Chemistry Club, and the Virginia Aggies Club has given me a sense of pride and belonging. It has also given me opportunities to give back to my community, which I am passionate about. After all, I would only have the opportunities I do now with my community guiding and encouraging me. So far, I have accumulated 28 hours of community service, including engineering mentoring, breast cancer awareness, preparing food for less fortunate communities, making affirmation cards, painting mental health cards, and trash pickup.

I plan to continue my campus involvement and pursue research and internship opportunities to help me gain more knowledge in Chemical engineering and practical skills that will help me in a future career in Food Science Engineering, leading toward my goal of making food more accessible and healthier to underprivileged communities. My advice for High School Seniors is to work on building good habits early because it will become harder to change in the future during stressful periods, especially when dealing with procrastination. Learn to prioritize and manage your time wisely.

George "Trey" Smith, Old Dominion University

Cybersecurity 3.52

No clubs joined this semester

The transition to college was fairly easy for me as just being focused on what I needed to do kept me on track.

For all gen Ed's focus on what interest you instead of just randomly choosing one. Try to find a topic that interest you and that helps you progress your grad track.

As to my high school I don't personally feel like it helped set me up for college mind my mindset did.

Liam Walton, Penn State

My name is Liam Walton I attend Penn State and went to Tabb High School in VA. My major I plan to pursue is mechanical engineering and I have not decided on a minor yet. My GPA for the semester is not out yet as grades are not finalized but high school was a 4.8

Overall I found college to be a fairly easy transition from high school. I excelled at most things but was hit hard by finals. I joined the Penn State boxing club and other smaller clubs. In these we did food drives, stadium clean ups and community service. Overall I'd say yes high school prepared me very well for college. My advice to seniors would be to get involved in any way you can and to try anything and everything. College is your chance to figure out who you are. One last tip would be study study study for finals. I spent countless hours studying and preparing and still didn't do as good as I wished. College tests are very different than high school ones.

Astro Isaiah Bren, Tuskegee University

I am Astro Isaiah Bren, a current freshman at Thee Tuskegee University, hailing from Newport News, VA where I graduated from Phoebus High School. I plan on majoring in construction science management and possibly minoring in business.

I am thankful for your financial contribution. Your contribution helped offset my unmet need.

This semester I participated in The Marching Crimson Piper Marching Band, where as was a part of the drum line. I was able to cross my drum line section fraternity, "STicky Thang" this semester as well.

College was a mixture of easy and hard. I feel like teachers in high school provided more guidance and structure where as in college, you are responsible for your owl learning and studying.

The advice I would give to a high school senior would be to research your major and learn about the curriculum and course needed to be successful. Time Management is also key when navigating college. Be open minded to new and exciting ideas, people come from various places with different backgrounds and viewpoints, but listening to understand is instrumental in your success. Finding a study buddy and advocating for yourself is also important. If you are unsure about something, don't be afraid to ask. Tuskegee has plenty of people that are willing to help you because they enjoy helping others.

I feel my high school prepared me for college because during high school, I took a couple of dual enrollment classes as well as earned a certification in Building Construction I, II, and III. Having the basic foundation and knowledge helped me in my construction classes, however math was challenging due to the dialect of my instructor.

The environment and the culture at Tuskegee university is one big family. Everyone there is to help you achieve your goals, be successful in the future, and push you to your highest limits.

Rhonda Chrisp, Virginia State University

My name is Rhonda Chrisp and I am a current student of Virginia State University and my alma mater is Kecoughtan High school. My major is Psychology and my GPA currently stands at a 3.8. I hope to achieve either a 3.9 or 4.0 by the end of the second semester. I am a full time member of the Trojan Explosion Marching Band and employee as an Office Assistant under the Residence Department on campus. I fully intend and plan to expand my participation in clubs and organizations as the year progresses. College was a fairly easy transition from high school, getting settled into my new lifestyle wasn't much of a struggle and I managed to stay highly focused on the educational aspect of things. Some advice I would give to a graduating senior going to college this fall is a quote I found a few years ago "Don't rush the process. Allow yourself to grow at your own pace. Stop comparing your life to what other people are achieving." I say this because college is a place to learn, grow, and experience new things, and engulf yourself in a multitude of great and life-changing opportunities. Take your time and make use of all your college has to offer as you may never know what blessings GOD may have waiting for you. Also, a scripture I would highly encourage them to read is John 14:17 " Peace I leave with you; My peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid." As you must carry peace with you and some peers on campus will try to sway you on a path not meant for you. Keep the lord and your teachings with you, and stay focused while enjoying college life without the risk of following the wrong crowd. Furthermore, it can be anxiety inducing to be in a new environment, but don't be afraid and embrace your time there. You'll find things you enjoy and you'll find the people that are meant for you! As for the curriculum, every college is different as to what they're looking for so I may not speak on that aspect. But as far as my experience; Kecoughtan High School, my AP and honors courses definitely prepared me for what Virginia State has to offer in terms of academics and interactions with my professors. As always, stay optimistic, encouraged, and remember you're blessed! Much love and appreciation to that presented me with this scholarship and opportunity!

Sekou Frye Jr, Fisk University

Major in Business Management with a Marketing focus

2.7 GPA first semester

I feel like High School to College was an easy transition socially, but a difficult one academically. I went to a small school for high school, and Fisk is small as well so it was easy to connect with others socially. The workload was a little more which meant more time needs to be put into that.

To the seniors graduating in 2024 I would like to tell them to have a goal going into college whether it's getting a 4.0 or joining as many clubs as possible. You also have to manage your time well. There are going to be so many parties at whatever school you go to, but you have to know when to just

say no and get into the books. I did take my own advice, but I know I could've done way better than what I did. High school prepares you if you take classes like Spanish and math, but some of the others like English, not really because your going to have to write those papers, and teachers are a lot stricter on what they want in the essays.

My final remarks are to not stress yourself out too much. Have fun but know how to balance it. Also be sure to find people smarter than you and create relationships with them so they can help you with work. Lastly, don't worry too much about the females they will always be there. Love y'all, and I'm proud of you guys.

Evin Wells, Howard University

Computer Science Major

AFROTC and Club Rugby

I'd say it was an easy transition. The hardest part is being able to time manage with school and extracurricular activities. Biggest advice to give is DO NOT put things off until the last minute. And surround yourself with other people that will push you forward rather than hold you back.

My 1st semester I have a 3.31gpa. But it's definitely only uphill from here on out. Just had to find out what works best for me.

Nicholas Andrew Pearce, University of Alabama - Huntsville

My name is Nicholas Andrew Pearce. I currently attend college at the University of Alabama in Huntsville and I went to Woodside high school. My major is in aerospace engineering with a minor in mathematics and my estimated GPA is a 3.5. I did not join any clubs however I joined the fraternity of Pi Kappa Alpha towards the middle of the semester.

College to me was an easy transition because high school has so many restrictions and takes up so much time that your life is pretty much school. When I was in college I had plenty of time to practice and learn new hobbies like playing guitar and beach volleyball. I enjoyed college a lot more which I believe is part of the reason why it was easier to me.

I would tell them to take the first semester seriously and don't slack off because once finals role around college can become a little stressful and your grades will start to fall if you don't put the proper effort into school.

I would say my basic classes at the high school did not however I took multiple classes at governor's school which helped me get a feel for what college classes were like and helped me be mentally prepared for the rigor of college classes.

Thank you for helping support my efforts in this process and I hope everything goes well for the next graduating class of seniors.

Tayvon Tyler, Virginia Union University

Major: Business Management

Minor: Communications

GPA: 3.42

Clubs/ Organizations: Football

The main advice I'll give is to turn in your work on time. Professors rarely give extensions to late work and one missing assignment can definitely drop your grade by a lot. If you're taking a class in college that was somewhat similar to a one you took in high school, the curriculum is going to be 5x more advanced.

Ethan Alfonso, Stanford University

Hafa adai everyone! My name is Ethan Alfonso, and I am a freshman at Stanford University. My alma mater is THE Hampton High School. I am double majoring in Psychology and Comparative Studies in Race and Ethnicity on a pre-law track. I have joined several organizations at Stanford including: Freshman Class Council, Senate Associate Program, and the Pilipino-American Student Union. The transition to college can best be described as a rollercoaster. Some days you feel like you have everything figured out. Meanwhile, on other days, it can feel like too much is happening all at once. As the saying goes, time is the healer of all wounds. Throughout the challenges, I found communities that were able to connect me with support and resources to help ease into the college lifestyle. My high school curriculum slightly prepared me for college, but there are still many things in college that you just have to experience. I would advise a graduating senior to not force anything. This goes for friendships, experiences, and opportunities. Continue being your authentic self, and you will start to attract the friendships, experiences, and opportunities you deserve. As you enter the college setting, you are your biggest advocate. Remember to never settle for less.