

Wintana Alem (UC Berkeley)

There were very little challenges I have faced while attending UC Berkeley. The first challenge was realizing that I am the only African American girl engineer accepted for the 2008-2009 academic year. At first it was hard being the only African American in a lecture consisting of 100 or more students, but after a while I got used to it. In a way it made me stronger because I am unique. I was also lacking confidence in myself and feared that I was going to not do well here at Cal, but I soon came over that fear when I realized everyone else was feeling the same thing. The Cal community was very welcoming so I felt very welcomed. I am glad I am here at Cal because I don't see myself fitting in any better anywhere else. My successes for far are that I managed to survive my first year at Cal. I have become resourceful by getting involved in different organizations and going to career fairs. I started mentoring this past year and I hope to continue to do the same for the years to come. Overall it is so far a success story for me here at Cal.

An experience that had the most significant impact on me was attending Pre-Engineering Program two weeks before school started. In this program we learned Physics, Math, and Chemistry for two weeks straight from 8AM-9PM with only lunch and dinner breaks. It was BOOTCAMP, it was difficult but in the end, we all ended up friends and they are the closest friends I have. The Multicultural Engineering Program is the organization that puts on the event and it was the best experience I had. PREP helped me get ahead with school before school had even started, I made great friends, and I got advice about what classes I should take. MEP is the best organization in terms of advice and resources as well.

Overall, receiving this scholarship allowed me to be a part of a community that I would not have been able to be a part of if I did not have the money for it. Also by having this scholarship I was able to focus on my schoolwork and giving back to the community while staying involved with organizations. My family and I are very grateful for this scholarship because it took the stress away from my parents of having to work extra to provide for me. I am grateful for this scholarship because I was able to attend Cal without worrying about the finances and also I was able to focus on my studying. Thank you for giving me this opportunity to let you all know about my experiences so far at Cal, and most of all thank you for supporting me and giving me this scholarship.

Rona Sumanga (UNLV)

During the two years I have invested at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, I have triumphed over a myriad of life changing and influencing experiences, which enabled me to become a more mature and responsible individual. For instance, moving to Nevada has been the most mature decision I could ever make as a young adult. Ideally, at the naive age of 18, my decision to move to Nevada was solely based on wanting to gain my independence. Never did I imagine that along the way, my decision would help shape who I am today. I sacrificed other educational opportunities and the comfort of being near my family in order to acquire an independence that was neither guaranteed nor easily handed. The prospect of my independence brought about various stresses that I never

thought would be possible to experience in such a short time span. I was faced with the troublesome burden of having to find a job to supplement my personal expenses, make irrational decisions without the consultation of my family, find daily transportation, disengage myself from a negative relationship, and experience the effects of the recession. Although it was a tough road to overcome, I was able to do so with the primary objective and desire to attain a college degree.

Within the two years at UNLV, I have acquired and maintained a 3.66 GPA, which enabled me to be a part of the Dean's Honor List. I have changed my major as a Nurse to Elementary Education. I am expected to graduate in January 2011 with a degree in Bachelor of Science in Elementary Education. From there, I hope to acquire my masters in Educational Psychology.

Steven Nava (U.C Irvine)

I just wanted to let you know how I'm doing after finishing my second year at UC-Irvine. This last quarter went well for me as I earned a 3.67 GPA and made it to the dean's list. I decided to do a travel-study program over the summer and I just got back from Spain after being there for a little over five weeks. I took a class on Spanish Cinema and another on sculpture. I also had a chance to travel to various cities in Spain.