

STUDENT LEADERS SPEAK

TO COLLEGE PRESIDENTS, CEOs, AND POLICYMAKERS



every learner
← →
everywhere


GlobalMinded

THE EQUITY
PROJECT LLC



Executive Summary

This year, GlobalMindED and Every Learner Everywhere embarked on a learning journey to listen and understand the voice of the most vulnerable students during the health pandemic, multiple measures of racial/social injustices and COVID-caused learning slide.

We began with 102 student leaders and selected twenty-five Student Ambassadors to represent the larger group and all students in the wider audience of those across the country. In this report you will read insights from the GlobalMindED/Every Learner Everywhere Student Ambassadors as they reflect on their lives, their learning, their digital experiences, their challenges, their setbacks and their triumphs.

What has ravaged our country and much of the world in the last year showed these students what they are truly made of—their inner strength, their ability to draw on resources, their ability to be vulnerable, the courage to be real and the bold, raw capacity to show up, speak up and stand up for what they rightly deserve through their voice, their advocacy and their inclusive leadership.

In the pages that follow you will read our students anonymized comments, a summary of five students from an in-person interview with Dr. Dwinita Mosby Tyler, and their personal stories which they crafted with the assistance of their business mentors. You will learn first-hand why these students will beat the odds as First Gen to graduate from college and why they are the best-bet hires any company can make. We hope that our work this year will normalize student voice and presence at the college leadership table so that students can influence and direct what they most need from those who run their college environment.

Thank you for listening.

Carol J. Carter

Founder and CEO, GlobalMindED

Dr. Jessica Rowland Williams

Director, Every Learner Everywhere

WICHE, WCET

Dr. Dwinita Mosby Tyler

Chief Catalyst, The Equity Project



Who are our First Gen Student Ambassadors?

- Our students make up every ethnic and diverse background, type of college, and multiple geographies.
- Some students learned from home all year in their beds, while younger siblings in the same room tried to learn remotely.
- Some students were on campus in isolated situations to preserve their health during COVID.
- Almost all students cited mental health, stress, and anxiety due to COVID caused safety restrictions, overwhelming racial injustice, loss of jobs and lives of family members and the weight they experienced to persist and hold up others around them.
- Some students loved the freedom that remote learning provided. Other students struggled with mandated 100% online learning and missed the in-person connection with other students, teachers, advisors, and the staff.
- Some students cited family pressure and added responsibilities when studying from home which impeded their ability to study and learn.

What did the Student Ambassadors experience through our program in 2020-2021?

- Out of 102 GlobalMindED/Every Learner Everywhere leaders whose input comprised the initial Student Speak Report published in September 25 were selected as Ambassadors.
- Ambassadors conducted surveys of their peers, gathering feedback from 270 students, resulting in the November 2020 Peer to Peer Report.
- Almost all were featured with Dr. Jessica Rowland Williams or Carol Carter on national and even global panels where their voices were shared. One student participated in an event out of Africa that was broadcast globally to millions of viewers.
- Participation in optional monthly professional development to support each other and build their workplace skills.
- Ambassadors were matched with business professionals as mentors who worked to support them, provide professional guidance, and help them see their strengths during this hard time.
- Ambassadors compiled their personal story, which was published in the GlobalMindED newsletter and read by more than 15,000 people daily.
- Ambassadors completed a final written survey, the results of which are anonymized for this report.
- Dr. Mosby Tyler interviewed 5 Ambassadors individually for this report
- Ambassadors will participate on panels with national experts during GlobalMindED 2021.
- Students learned:
 - personal agency
 - how to have a voice with authority figures
 - how to leverage a national network how to get support from a peer group
 - how to build professional skills
 - to utilize personal power from their personal story
 - how to be on the national global virtual stage
 - how to persist in the face of struggle



Key Takeaways

from Anonymized Ambassador Surveys

"Zoom was a great tool."

"The best part is the availability to jump from meeting to meeting."

"Best part was learning more about computers and different software that was integrated into our learning."

"I appreciated recorded lectures and being able to re-watch them before exams."

Zoom was by far the preferred method of online learning. Students also liked pre-recorded lectures so they could study later, online office hours, and the intimacy of break-out rooms.

"All of my courses have been do-it-yourself style."

"Coming from a low-income household in a rural community, I did not understand the need for a computer until college. By then, I had a lot of catching up to do."

"It was much harder to get timely responses. Before, you could just walk over to their office and get an answer"

"YouTube was unfortunately one of my best professors."

Students cited lack of preparation and support from faculty. Students were frustrated with lack of timely communication from faculty.

"I spent much of my summer outside the library in my car to complete the requirements because my house does not have internet."

"The worst part, I would say, is not leaving. I found myself waking up, staying in my bed, and staying in my bed all day."

Most students learned from their bedrooms, with distractions and limited internet, limited community, and lack of interactions.

"Some professors clearly were not able to understand what students have been going through during this remote learning experience." Colleges "did not properly meet our financial and mental health needs."

"Each student is affected differently by the online learning environment."

"No time to recover over fall break before finals. No rest in the spring semester because spring break was canceled. Constant working without recovery."

"The burnout is very real this semester due to Zoom fatigue, lack of spring break, no real attention from administration; sending out mental health 'check-in' does not supplant a real break from school."

"The pandemic made it extremely hard for me to access books."

Students felt a lack of support when understanding students' personal experiences with lack of technology, job loss, time zone differences, physical and mental health concerns. Many students suffered burnout due to lack of breaks, Zoom fatigue, constant work, and anxiety. Students want more focus on mental health, the value of the education (getting their money's worth), providing tech tools and a freeze college tuition.

Ambassador's Notes to College Presidents:

"You are only as successful as the people under you."

"Students and their families are struggling financially and mentally. We need more resources such as laptops for students, federal grants, loan forgiveness, lower interest rates, internships that actually pay us enough to live."

"Internet access should be included in tuition. Many students do not have access to the internet at home."

"Invest in my generation of college students because we are the future. All students my age need to have equal access to technology so that we all have the opportunity to be successful."



Student Leaders Speak: 5 Voices Representing 25

Because of the leadership they exhibited over the past year, we selected five (5) Student Ambassadors to speak with to gain insights related to student experiences, challenges, and hopes. We conducted 30-minute individual virtual interviews with each student that centered on the following questions:

1. How have you changed, shifted, struggled, or grown, as a student leader, under the weight of COVID-19 and the nation's racial challenges? Describe how it has all impacted you.
2. What have you learned and how have you grown from your engagement with your mentor? Describe.
3. Describe how your experience as an ambassador has shaped your leadership.
4. Describe the most important tools or support systems you used to help you navigate through this complex time in history. What has helped you to cope?
5. What are examples of innovative or excellent leadership techniques that instructors have used to guide your virtual learning? Describe.

Q1

How have you changed, shifted, struggled, or grown, as a student leader, under the weight of COVID-19 and the nation's racial challenges? Describe how it has all impacted you.

Student Ambassadors all shared the difficulty of balancing the weight of a health crisis, complex racial challenges and all the things associated with such an unpredictable social climate. Students shared personal stories about struggles such as:

- Being laid off from jobs because of the impact of COVID-19.
- Increased responsibilities in caring for family members who were now also at home (virtual learning, laid off from jobs, etc.).

- Needing to take more responsibility for their own learning process because some instructors were not experienced enough in virtual learning strategies and practices to help them.
- Living in an environment where internet access was limited and sometimes even absent while balancing this in the midst of a health pandemic.
- Experiencing pain over the racial challenges in the U.S. and a feeling of not knowing what might happen.
- Feeling extreme isolation from friends.

Student Ambassadors also shared stories about their personal growth during a complicated time in our history. Students shared:

- The necessity of diving into history to learn more about the racial climate in the U.S. Almost all of the students shared that this movement pushed them to do research and even learn more about politics.
- One Computer Science major said the pandemic forcing us into virtual learning gave him more experience in his major; more practice with technological solutions and more opportunities to create innovations.
- Every student believed they increased their leadership competencies because they had to learn how to navigate through difficult challenges.

Q2

What have you learned and how have you grown from your engagement with your mentor? Describe.

- 100% of the Student Ambassadors shared the importance and positive impact of having mentors in their lives. Each student shared how the mentor helped them work through everything from navigating the impact of our societal crises to working with them to employ tools to help navigate the virtual learning environment better.

- One student shared the power of mentorship being a two-way learning scenario. It was the first time the mentor had ever worked with an international student and the student shared they were receiving advice from their mentor that they had never gotten in school. This reciprocity model seemed to be very important to students.
- Every Student Ambassador expressed satisfaction that mentors scheduled regular (mostly monthly) meetings with them.
- Though all positive, Student Ambassadors expressed a range of sentiments about the way in which they experienced the mentorship model:
 - Some students saw the relationship as more maternal/paternal; the mentor relationship felt parental, and the students preferred this.
 - Some students saw the relationship as more collegial; an acknowledgement that each party provides a valuable resource to the other.
 - Some students saw the mentorship relationship as healing; a relationship that helped to mitigate the pain of the current social climate.

Q3

Describe how your experience as an ambassador has shaped your leadership.

- Though Student Ambassadors certainly described societal and virtual learning challenges, they also shared how being an ambassador and being exposed to so many different kinds of people increased their ability to see the world from the point of view of others more easily.
- 100% of Student Ambassadors shared being exposed to new and different opportunities like:
 - Being selected to be on a panel, or
 - Being forced to trust their own decision-making versus over-relying on approval from others.
- Students shared how empowering it was to be recognized, publicly, for being a leader.
 - In several cases, this was the first time students had ever experienced this type of acknowledgement.
 - In some cases, it was the first time a student had been referred to as “leader.”

Q4

Describe the most important tools or support systems you used to help you navigate through this complex time in history. What has helped you to cope?

- Overwhelmingly, Student Ambassadors relied on their families as the major support system to help them in navigating this complex time in history.
 - It is important to note that the complicating factor was the fact that more people in the family were also at home, making concentration on studies even more difficult for the student. Still, the proximity to family seemed to be an important coping mechanism.
- Next to family, students expressed their mentors as being a critical support system for them. Several Student Ambassadors shared how their mentors helped to steer them in the right direction, kept them from giving up and helped them grow.
- Only one student shared that an instructor was a key support system. This student shared how the instructor went out of their way to provide virtual spaces for the student-teacher relationship to be enhanced. This was accomplished through systems like Q&A hours and discussion groups.

Q5

What are examples of innovative or excellent leadership techniques that instructors have used to guide your virtual learning? Describe.

- Students acknowledged that virtual courses could be boring and shared that instructors who leveraged interactive strategies were the most successful. The most mentioned strategy was using the polling function or providing a rewards program to students so they earned points for high participation.
 - Students shared that instructors who took the extra step to introduce resources to the virtual setting had more success.
- The majority of students felt they were seeing more instructors begin to discuss what is going on in the world more than ever. They shared that instructors were more willing to talk about things like race/racism and were much more dialogue-based than lecture-based.
 - Students gave examples of activities like critiquing a movie or providing real-life examples to augment what they were teaching.

HIGHLIGHTS

- There is a deep and concerning recognition that mental health issues are escalating in the student population.
 - Several students acknowledged that they were struggling with mental health issues that grew worse with the pressures of balancing COVID-19 implications, racial challenges, and virtual learning.
 - These students shared that they have had to seek therapy more now than in the past.
- Students are relying less on their school and more on their families for support and coping strategies.
 - Students continue to express the lack of resources within the schools to help them navigate through these complex times.
 - Students express a hierarchy of support that includes (in order of reliance) family, formal mentors, therapists and sometimes an instructor.
- It is clear in the dialogue that students are crying out for mentorship and direction as they work to “normalize” the realities of virtual learning.
 - Students communicated a sentiment of trying to make meaning out of the system of virtual learning; sometimes even when the instructor has not been successful in doing so.
 - Students expressed a sentiment of being left alone to figure it all out, or “do-it-yourself” learning.
 - Students are concerned about the cost/value ratio, whether or not they have gotten their money’s worth.
 - There was a notable sentiment from students that they may not be receiving the optimal level of education in the virtual environment; the students are perceiving virtual learning as “less than” that of in-person learning.

ABOUT OUR STUDENT AMBASSADORS

 ur GlobalMindED Student Ambassador team represented over 21 different colleges and universities across the country. Ambassadors did peer outreach, primarily, in their own college or university. Peers engaged in this process also represented, predominately, students of color.

Metro State University
Moorpark College/Cal Poly Pomona
Colorado State University Pueblo
Fort Lewis College
Bethune–Cookman University
Georgia Highlands College
University of Southern Indiana
Towson University
University of Michigan
Tougaloo College
North Carolina A&T University
North Carolina Central University
William Paterson University
Eastern New Mexico University
Linfield University
University of Portland
Motlow State Community College
San Jacinto Community College
Texas A & M University
Marshall University
West Virginia University



What's your personal story?

I'm a half-Mexican, half-Guatemalan who grew up in the cities of both Canoga Park and Simi Valley, California, who found a real passion for the Biotech world in high school. All of my life I've wanted to try new things and never thought I wanted to chase one specific dream or career. But, thanks to some very influential people in my life, I feel like my passion for Biotechnology is strong enough to chase that career and stick with it. The three areas of expertise that pique my interest at the moment are Cell Culture, Protein Purification, and Genetic Manipulation. Now, all that's left to be done is to get there, and finding the path that leads me there is something I'm looking forward to. Beyond my career goals, I like fishing, camping, playing soccer, and playing video games, and most recently, chess. Something about sitting by the campfire, while watching over the fishing rigs helps me think clearly; playing video games and chess really helps my creativity and my tactics, and playing soccer is one of my favorite ways to stay fit.

What struggles have made you strong?

There have been two important instances in my life where I've struggled with identity and self-love. First, it began in elementary school as a rowdy, naive kid who could never sit still. Teachers, faculty, and the principal didn't like that too much, and told me there had to be something wrong with me. They said I had a behavioral disorder like Autism or ADHD, or even Tourette's syndrome. Thankfully my loving parents defended me and let me know that I was perfectly fine. The suspicions of a behavioral disorder were debunked thanks to a psychiatrist, who I thank to this day for reassuring me the whole way through that I'm a wise and well-mannered person deep down.

The other instance of this struggle occurred during both years of middle school where I felt that I should become perfect—that I should be the coolest, the most skilled, and the best at everything I touch. I became addicted to exercise, wanted to be the best in my studies, and be the coolest kid in the whole school. This came at the cost of my overall mental and physical health, which I still regret even now. I neglected myself socially, physically, and mentally because I was too busy trying to become the best at everything for no understandable reason. Yes, I

may have lost weight and gained muscle, but I should've never let myself deteriorate my personal hygiene to the point of starving myself. I should've never deprived myself of sleep and I should've never turned my back on my friends just because I thought they would make me something "un-cool". That experience has taught me that I shouldn't expect myself to be perfect, and I should be okay with how I am no matter what point in time I'm in, and I should never forget about my friends or where I came from.

How has the GlobalMindED/ELE Ambassador Program and Leadership Program influenced your professional path?

It has shown me that my dream is pretty big and that becoming the cure through Biotechnology is something I should be proud of. I've been influenced to take up any and all opportunities that come my way to get to where I want to be in my future. As well as that, it has influenced me to become a more conscientious person despite these trying times we currently face.

What would make you the strongest candidate for the job?

I would say my passion for the career is what makes me stand out because I want to become a pioneer for the newest series of treatments for various diseases around the world, and I feel that my passion is strong enough to influence others to do the same.

What is special about you that an employer can't live without?

My ability to be a team player is what makes me special because in the Biotech world, I will be meeting and working with new people every day. I believe that the ability to have others rally around you and get work done is a vital and fundamental principle to working in the Biotech industry.

How will you set a new standard for the job, once hired?

With grit and passion, I will pour my blood, sweat, and tears, not into the products I make, but into the work that I do to make those products become a reality. Being perfect is one thing that can never be achieved, but striving to form a path to perfection is something that can be achieved.



What is your personal story?

Greetings! I am Michael Brown, a sophomore business administration major, pre-law criminal justice minor at the illustrious Bethune-Cookman University located in Daytona Beach, FL. I'm originally from the beautiful city of Jacksonville, FL. I am currently in my second semester of my sophomore year and I am a part of two academic organizations: National Society of Leadership and Success, and Pre-Alumni council. I plan to become more involved in the coming years at my University, but it has been a struggle with the COVID-19 pandemic shutting down our beloved university.

What struggles have made you strong?

I was raised in a single-parent household with my mother and sister. I have seen my fair share of struggle from watching my mother and facing personal hardships of being an African American individual in today's society.

My mother had to work exceptionally hard to take care of my younger sister and me, as well as herself. Due to our circumstances, I had to learn how to be responsible at a young age, and because of this I have always looked at the world differently. I am often referred to as more mature for someone my age because of the knowledge I possess. I have been a hardworking and motivated individual for as long as I remember. The life that I have lived has given me a different perspective on many things.

What would make you the strongest candidate for the job?

I have always had the mindset to work for anything that I want. For example, I simply never ask my family members for money, I always believed it was better for me to do some work to earn that money. I got my first job at the age of 16, and I have been working ever since. I always give my best effort at work which led to a promotion in customer service. I currently work two jobs while managing a full course load, it is a great way to educate myself on balancing real life and school life. Watching my mother was my motivation to always be a hard working individual and never take anything in life for granted. During many of my school years, I have been on the honor roll, because I felt it was the way to honor my mother's hard work. I always put the best effort into any activity or project that I take on.

What is special about you that an employer can't live without?

I am very compassionate and try to help in whatever way that I can. I learned this from watching my mother work so hard with little to no help, modeling how to always be there for others. I never want to see others face hardships that I know can be avoided or lessened, and I want to be someone who helps those facing hardships. This same motivation inspired my career choice in the legal field, particularly legal services in Human Resources. I decided to further my education at Bethune-Cookman after high school graduation because I didn't want to become another statistic—I wanted to be better than what the world thinks of me. I chose a major in business after participating in internship programs my high school offered that sparked my interest. For example, one of the programs in which I participated, I was one of 12 students selected to work at a bank. We learned all the key points of running our school's branch, as well as managing a business in general.

How has the GlobalMindED/ELE Ambassador Program and Leadership Program influenced your professional path?

The GlobalMindED Inclusive Leadership Program has influenced me greatly. The support and inspiration is beyond exceptional and is most definitely appreciated. I'm grateful for all the opportunities that develop my mindset on accomplishing my goals. GlobalMindED has done a remarkable job expressing the impact of equity gaps and creating a capable, diverse talent pipeline through connections to role models, mentors, internships for low-income students, and returning adults. Their goal to support first-generation students motivated me to apply to become an Ambassador to further share my voice. I'm grateful to be able to share my story and hope that others may relate and find opportunities to better themselves.





What is your personal story?

We have a saying in Haiti: L'Union Fait La Force” (In Unity There is Strength). As a first generation college student, a child of Haitian immigrants, and a resident of Florida, I've often found myself straddling two worlds. Aside from the general highs and lows of growing up, it was tough to find a balance of honoring my culture and traditions while also striving to perform academically.

When my parents immigrated to the United States, they brought their Haitian culture and traditions here with them, something I hated for a long time. Yes, the food is to die for, but I did not like the idea of people thinking I was associated with witchcraft and voodoo. “No, I do not do voodoo, as a matter of fact, I am Christian.” “No, I do not eat cats.” “No, I did not get on a boat and sail to America.” Living in Naples, Florida gave me the advantage of two cultures and two languages, but I often felt different and every time I was asked this, I realized just how much I was.

Therefore, as I had to continually deny each stereotype thrown my way; I began to distance myself from the Haitian culture. I no longer wanted my kinky hair and instead wanted a perm, and instead of talking to my parents in their mother tongue, Creole, I chose to speak in English. I still felt supported by the tight knit Haitian community in my hometown but I struggled to keep those relationships, especially as I began to excel in school.

What struggles have made you strong?

It was not until I was back in my parent's motherland that I had a pivotal turnaround. For a month I was living amongst a group of strangers with a culture I had, for the most part, completely disowned. But it was amidst the mountainous terrain, in a small, impoverished village, with soil as red as Mars, that I kindled a reconnection with my culture. Mare Rouge, we called it, had homes with walls made of sticks or rubble, rooftops of tin or hay, and fences of branches. There, the voisnes (neighbors) wake up at the break of dawn to collect water from the nearest well as the kids get ready for lekòl (school) and others tend to the land.

The families in this small town lived a community centric lifestyle. At every corner they offered to help one another, whether it was running to the market or picking up children. I also saw the pride that they had for their country. Even with the political turmoil, the people were united. That is when I realized the importance of the Haitian motto, “L'Union Fait La Force”—in unity there is strength. Not only did it refer to unity within a nation, a city or a community, but it also meant unity within one's self.

Returning to Haiti made me realize that running away from my ethnicity stripped me of my identity and made words easy to break me. But when I embrace who I am, I am confident, I am in harmony with myself.

How has the GlobalMindED/ELE Ambassador Program and Leadership Program influenced your professional path?

Being a part of GlobalMindED has allowed me to find a sense of community with other students who have like-minded goals. I'm grateful to have this community to support me during school and as I launch my career. They continue to push me to do better and motivate me everyday. And with the help of the National Society of Black Engineers and my Haitian community I have continued to embrace who I am at the University of Michigan. Therefore, L'Union Fait La Force.





What is your personal story?

I'm a young Hispanic man who came from poverty in Santa Fe, NM. I applied myself since a younger age and even received an associate's degree in high school. I went on to get my undergraduate degree in electronic engineering technology from Eastern New Mexico University at the age of 20. Los Alamos National Laboratory offered me an internship after high school. I have maintained it and now work as a full-time employee. I've been accepted to New Mexico State universities graduate program and will be pursuing that degree online while working at LANL. I've used education to break the cycle of addiction and poverty within my family. I hope that my actions speak to the younger generations of my community and in my family, and shed light on the opportunities that education can bring.

What struggles have made you strong?

Not only was I a first-generation college student, but I was also the first to even graduate from high school. Navigating through the process of applying for schools and scholarships was the biggest challenge of the process. Learning this on my own lead me to find programs and organizations like GearUp and GlobalMindED which played a big role in my success.

How has the GlobalMindED/ELE Ambassador Program and Leadership Program influenced your professional path?

I would say the biggest help from Ambassador Program and the GlobalMindED Leadership Program has been the networking possibilities and workshops. GlobalMindED has linked me with many like-minded people who have similar experiences. The workshops have helped me to become a well-rounded student, and have covered many topics that weren't in my undergraduate curriculum.

What is special about you that an employer can't live without? How will you set a new standard for the job, once hired?

The most special thing about me is that I am always eager to learn and improve. My current project at LANL is to develop a procedure to automatically calibrate digital multi-meters. A process that took over an hour before could take as little as 5 minutes now. I enjoy process automation and finding a more efficient way to do something. There is always room to improve and become more efficient. My drive would be the new standard for a job. Once I'm in a working position I want to spend my time wisely and do the best job that I can.





What is your personal story?

My name is Rontavious Coley and I am a first-generation black male college student. I grew up raised by my grandmother in low-income housing. Where I am from the only people I had to look up to were athletes and rappers, but I always knew that I could be more.

Not having a traditional family didn't stop me from being a leader in my studies or a leader to my peers. I've learned that people tend to gravitate towards me, so I try to leave a positive influence on anyone that I meet. I enjoy coaching youth basketball and mentoring kids in middle school. I actively assist with the minority male initiative at Georgia Highlands College that is dedicated to enrolling, retaining, and graduating men of color, called Brother 2 Brother.

What struggles have made you strong?

Growing up without a father was always a tough feat for me. I was always in gifted classes growing up and it seemed that everyone had a traditional family. I was accompanied by a few mentors as I got older in life and they helped guide me and keep me away from negative influences.

How has the GlobalMindED/ELE Ambassador Program and Leadership Program influenced your professional path?

GlobalMindED has helped me to realize even more that many people are watching and that my work does not go unnoticed on any level. It has helped me become a better communicator on- and off-line. It has helped me clean up my social media and monitor what and how I say things. It has given me a global mentality and enhanced my professionalism.

What would you be the strongest candidate for any job?

I would be the strongest candidate for any job because I am able to function in any demographic and I am able to adapt to any atmosphere. I have always had a leader mentality, so I am prepared to carry any team to the next level. I am prepared to go through adversity because I have been overcoming it all my life. I am ready to take the next step to help a company grow.

What is special about you that an employer can't live without? How will you set a new standard for the job, once hired?

I am a people person, and I can communicate with anyone. I don't mind talking to someone that others are uncomfortable speaking with. I am a more hands-on person, and I like to take on any task at hand. If I am hired, I will help any company diversify and grow culturally. I will help the company become a progressive and forward-moving business in the community that they are in and with me already being a business owner I feel that I have qualities that other people don't have naturally.

How will you set a new standard for the job, once hired?

Through all the adversity in my life I started a small business selling shoes in 2017. Now in 2021, I am opening my first shoe store in Rome, Georgia. This is big for me because I am the first person in my family with a brick-and-mortar business. Coming from where I come from I am happy to share with people that me, Rontavious Coley, will be a store owner in April of 2021. You can see the store on my Instagram page: @theearlyway247

I was raised by my grandmother in project housing, and I never had much but I always made a way when it came to progressing in life. If I ever failed at something in life, I blamed myself and fought harder. That is what made me into the relentless person I am today.





What is your personal story?

My story began halfway across the world, in a country called Tanzania. I was born and raised in Dar-es-Salaam, Tanzania for 12 years until my family had the chance to move to the United States in the summer of 2012. Education and opportunity are essential values in my family, and it is the primary driver in most of my decision making. Education was the reason I went to boarding school in Kenya when I was 11. Opportunity was the reason my parents decided to leave their home and move halfway across the world. Lastly, education and opportunity are why I am committed to achieving my goals as a proud first-generation college student.

What struggles have made you strong?

Moving to an unknown country was not easy for my family. Being a first-gen college student means that I have had to navigate the American school system on my own without additional assistance. Being the first in my family to go to college also means that I have carried a lot of expectations on my shoulders to gain success and become a good role model for my siblings. Throughout all of this, I have learned to embrace my background, instead of shying away from it. I have learned to use my resources and ask for help when I need it. Despite its unique challenges, my background has not been a hindrance, but rather a motivating factor in pursuing my dreams.

How has the GlobalMindED/ELE Ambassador Program and Leadership Program influenced your professional path?

I joined the Ambassador and GlobalMindED Leadership program recently as a senior, but look forward to experiencing the benefits that these programs offer. It has, however, helped me become a better professional. I have realized that every single individual has had different circumstances despite having the same “titles”. Two individuals that are first-generation students or minorities or low-income will have vastly different experiences due to many other factors. I have been more cognizant of learning about different experiences and perspectives. I have also become more careful not to generalize about different populations.

What is special about you that an employer can't live without? How will you set a new standard for the job, once hired?

One valuable aspect about me that would make me a strong candidate for any job is my work ethic. I am determined to work hard and be successful, because I feel I owe it to my family to ensure that their sacrifices are not taken for granted. Another primary strong suit of mine is my ability to integrate into a team environment. When working with a new team, I always make sure to learn about my team members on a personal level. This enables me to establish a level of trust while learning about their strengths and weaknesses, both in business and in life. I believe the level of success which results is reliant upon the feeling of being valued and included in the team.

Another strong suit of mine that would prove beneficial to my employer is mentorship, whether it be as a mentee or a mentor. I have had many of these relationships while in college, and experienced first-hand how mentorship can change the trajectory of someone's life. As an employee, I would seek out and take advantage of mentorship to help my own career, and eventually be able to help others. I would not be where I am today without mentorship.

What are your biggest passions in life?

One of my biggest passions in life is soccer. I have been playing since I was around 5 years old and it is my primary stress relief. I have not played competitive soccer since high school, but I continue to play whenever I have a chance.

What do you look forward to most in your life after school?

As an Honors Business Marketing major at Texas A & M, I look forward to being able to apply my skill set in an industry that I am passionate about. I have prepared and worked hard throughout my college career to reach this point, and am excited to see what the next step in my journey is. In the coming years, I would also like to use my knowledge and skills to help students who are walking a similar path as I have. I am fortunate to have had mentors who have been fundamental throughout my college career, and I look forward to providing the same support for students in the future.



What is your personal story?

One of the biggest things I have been determined to do in my life is spread love and help other people, anyway that I can. My name is Hector Ramos Diaz, and I grew up in San Francisco, California. One of the defining moments in my life, which helped spark the fire inside of me to help and serve others, was when I was diagnosed with depression and ADHD in my teenage years. In those days, I experienced what it was like to suffer alone, not be motivated to leave my bed and have no ambition to even go to class.

What struggles have made you strong?

When I was diagnosed, it was a wake-up call that made me prioritize my health and learn to take better care of myself. It also gave me a deep desire to connect with other people. My personal struggles have taught me several things I can use to comfort and help others as I transition from college to my professional career. I am determined to focus on mental health and wellness, and I'm committed to making this world better.

I love to listen to people share their stories, and every time I meet someone new, I discover something about myself, too. I have learned how to really listen to others with an open mind and heart, and to find valuable lessons in their stories. I enjoy teaching others that it is okay to be yourself, a unique individual. I have learned to be brave and courageous, and to ask others for help when I need it. I have learned how to be proud of myself, and to be a leader who stands up for what I believe is right. I have also learned that change is hard, but it is meant to feel uncomfortable so that we can push through and discover who we really are.

My life experiences have taught me how to lead by example, and this will allow me to be a better ally for anyone who comes to me for support. I know that my future is about standing up for others.

How has the GlobalMindED/ELE Ambassador Program and Leadership Program influenced your professional path?

The GlobalMindED Mentorship Program has given me the opportunity to grow as a person and become a better leader. It has helped me develop the imagination to define

my passion and strengthen the skills necessary to excel in my future career path. And lastly, it has helped me connect with other like-minded inclusive leaders on a personal level so that I can learn from them and improve the world we are living in.

What are your biggest passions in life?

In every action, I want to do my best to make this world a better place for everyone. So today, I lead by example. I love to help the homeless around my community by giving them food and clothes and just being there to listen to them when they want to talk and share their stories. While I can't fix the world overnight, I have learned the value of small meaningful action. It is as simple as listening, witnessing, looking for inclusive societies, and choosing to engage and connect with others who are as passionate as I am about healing the world through service. One of the most important things I learned through my own personal health experience is that I want to make everyone feel special and important. I know that people who are hurting want to be heard and seen for who they are, and not for the circumstances that they may be experiencing.

I would not be who I am today if it were not for my mom. From the beginning, she taught me to be nice—it is that simple. She taught me to be kind to others regardless of who they are, what they look like and where they come from. That has led me to want to devote my time and energy to nonprofit organizations that specialize in helping and supporting others in need. This desire to help and serve has not only helped me define who I am, but it has kept me determined to be who I am in today's often abrasive world.

This work, the mental wellness space is important, it is everything because we can change the world and make it a little bit better just by making some people smile and remember what it means to feel happy. That is my why. I want to help the others who find it hard to help themselves and I am excited to find my place in the mental health space to do just that, one person at a time, even if it is just a simple embrace. My passion for math meets my heart driven goals and that is how I will improve the world.



What is your personal story?

My name is Ethan Endres, and I'm from the city of Charleston, West Virginia. I am a Cyber Forensics and Security major at Marshall University. I plan on earning a Master's Degree in my major at Marshall University. After this, I plan on trying to find a job that is either high pay or in West Virginia to start me off. However, my dream job is working on network security with the National Security Agency (NSA).

What struggles have made you strong?

Staying determined to be in a technology major was tough, because I had no computer science classes available to me throughout all my K-12 schooling. This also made it tough when I got into college, because I didn't realize what the different technology majors entailed or even what kind of things in technology I would like to study. I started off my college career as a Computer Science major, then after a year I figured out that wasn't what I was interested in. I decided to switch my major to something that was more hands-on, which is what led me to my current major.

How has the GlobalMindED/ELE Ambassador Program and Leadership Program influenced your professional path?

The GlobalMindED First Gen and Ambassador programs have given me access to financial aid which will help me in the future, because I want to apply for graduate school, but I do not have the money to afford it yet. On top of this the Ambassador program has give me access to all of the tools to success that I need to build my leadership and professional skills.

What is special about you that an employer can't live without? How will you set a new standard for the job, once hired?

I think that my teamwork and determination make me a great candidate for a job. I learned both from being the captain of the cross-country team at my high school. Once I start up on something, I don't quit on it, and will always try to find a way to succeed. I think my determination would be helpful, and is irreplaceable. I think after being hired I will try to set a new standard for striving for success around the workplace!





What is your personal story?

My name is Jair Flores and I recently earned a Bachelor of Science in Biology and a Bachelor of Arts in Spanish. I am currently in the process of applying to Dental School in efforts to become a dentist. I am a proud alumni of my hometown university, Colorado State University Pueblo. During my time at CSUP, I have always made it a personal goal to help others in any way possible. I have served as CSUP's Associated Student Government Vice President where, as a team, we created programs such as Pack Pals to mentor elementary students within the community of Pueblo. Our team also put together different care packages to be distributed throughout the semesters to CSUP students, to help them stay positive in these unprecedented times. I have also been lucky enough to be part of CSUP's men's wrestling team, which instilled lessons that I can and have applied to my life such as dedication, time management, how to be team oriented, and more.

What struggles have made you strong?

Although I was able to obtain two bachelor's degrees and be a member of many life changing programs at CSUP, the journey has not always been easy. There have been many challenges throughout my life that have molded me into the individual I am today. The adversity I have faced in life has always pushed me to be the best version of myself. The main obstacle I have faced as a child and into my adult life has been to be raised in a completely different culture from my own. My parents were immigrants from Mexico seeking a better life for their children. At the age of 25, they came to America with absolutely nothing except a dream. Our household was far different from everyone else's around me. In our home we mainly spoke Spanish, so I had to learn a completely new language and would often struggle switching from Spanish to English. We also celebrate many Mexican traditions such as Day of the Dead and Three Kings Day. Unfortunately growing up I wasn't able to relate with others about our traditions. Thankfully for me, I grew up with two brothers whom I could talk with about these experiences. The culture shock began to wear off as I grew older. This has helped me to be aware of other backgrounds, and appreciate the uniqueness between different cultures.

Another struggle was the fact I was a first generation college student. As a child my parents would always push education, so it was no surprise to them that I wanted to go to college. Although my parents always encouraged me to get a higher education, they never knew the necessary steps I would need to get there. I did not understand the importance of the ACT score, nor did I have the financials to purchase study guides or practice exams. Filling out FAFSA was also difficult for me. Little did I know this was only the beginning. The transition from high school to college was extremely challenging. I felt as if I did not belong at times being a first gen to college student. Luckily, there were programs that made me feel comfortable and see that I was in the right place. It was thanks to those programs that I had the opportunity to attend the GlobalMindED conference in 2019.

How has the GlobalMindED/ELE Ambassador Program and Leadership Program influenced your professional path?

When I attended the conference, it opened my eyes to the endless possibilities one has despite where you may come from. I was inspired seeing everything these individuals have accomplished and I continue to utilize everything I learned from the conference. I was thrilled when given the opportunity to become an Ambassador. The program has allowed me to make connections with other students like myself and learn pivotal life skills.

What is special about you that an employer can't live without? How will you set a new standard for the job, once hired?

My personal challenges have shaped me into the individual I am now. Throughout my journey, I have continued to grow and learn as much as possible. I am a hardworking and dedicated person who will continue to work until I complete all goals and tasks I have set. I am also innovative in the sense that if I see something that isn't working, I will find ways to alter or improve the system. Lastly, I am always willing to learn and receive feedback to better myself. It is with these skills I possess that I believe I will be able to excel in any situation I am facing. I am proud of the person I have become, and excited to accomplish the goals I have set for myself in the near future.



What is your personal story?

My name is Tomozia Graves, and I am from Baltimore, MD. I am a first-generation college student and I have been selected to be an Ambassador for GlobalMindED/Every Learner Everywhere. I am a senior at Towson University, majoring in Communication Studies, minoring in Business Communications & Liberal Arts with the anticipation of graduating in the Spring of 2021 with my Bachelor of Science degree.

What struggles have made you strong?

Being the youngest of six including three step-siblings, from an early age I have experienced many lessons and challenges. I believe my ethnicity has impacted my educational experience more than anything. I attended a predominantly white school as an elementary student and remember those experiences—all I wanted to do is fit in. My hair had to be styled nicely every day, I felt I had to act a different way than I was used to, and I had to be polished academically. I had struggled in school due to the fact that I learn differently from others, and it took me longer to process certain information. At that particular elementary school, I felt that I was not good enough and not like everyone else. I remember when the Vice Principal tried to persuade my mother to hold me back a year because of my learning disabilities. The Vice Principal made my mother feel small and that her voice didn't matter. However, my mother believed that I could truly succeed and demanded that I receive as much support as they could offer.

Although I have experienced struggles in my academics, I did not let that hinder me in my educational journey. It only pushed me to go further. My drive allowed me to stand out in any job/internship/career, due to my dedication and hard work ethic. I earned an associated degree from Harford Community College, then began at Towson University as a full-time student while working two part-time jobs, being active in many extracurricular activities, and taking care of my family. I completed a summer internship at a mortgage company as a Marketing Assistant. This experience helped me grow in many ways, and marketing allowed me to express myself. My supervisor saw my passion, which then led to me being hired on as a Coordinator.

What do you look forward to most in your life after school?

For my career goal, I hope to work in a nonprofit organization. I have been a peer-mentor at my school, and am currently work as a Peer Advising Assistant at Harford Community College. I have had the chance to assist students with scheduling and applying for graduation, and give them tips from my own personal experiences. Being an alumni of HCC allows me to personally connect with students, allowing them to feel comfortable and give them confidence that they can make it through their struggles.

What would make you the strongest candidate for the job?

Looking back at my challenges, I am proud of my accomplishments. If not for the Vice Principal and the advocacy of my mother, I wouldn't have the mindset I have today—to fight to succeed in life. I have struggled mentally, physically and spiritually; and through it all I maintained grace and humility. I am proud I did not let a few negative words stop me from becoming the best parts of me. I hope to be a mentor to others, spreading encouragement and telling/learning stories. I advocate for mental health awareness, as well as discussing topics on social issues, and sharing my personal experiences to help others.

How has the GlobalMindED/ELE Ambassador Program and Leadership Program influenced your professional path?

The Ambassador Program and the GlobalMindED Leadership Program has influenced my professional path in a superior way, allowing me to be one step ahead of where I need to go. I have networked with many other students across the world and staff members who share similar goals of mine. I was able to attend my very first panel, the Online Learning Consortium (OLC), which was one of my greatest achievements. I had the ability to speak on certain issues and having a voice for people who are like me, who experience similar situations. My professional mentor, Sarah, has been a true motivator and supporter for me, and with any decision I make I feel confident with the words and wisdom she gives. The Ambassador Program allows me to step into the role I have always dreamed of being in and that's being another voice, spreading love and positivity into this world.



“Don’t tell me that the sky is the limit when there’s footprints on the moon.”

—PAUL BRANDT

What is your personal story?

Ever since the second grade, I fantasized about life in space. As I grew older, my fascination with outer space continued and as I researched my future, I was led to pursue Aerospace Engineering. Not only am I intrigued by space itself, but I am also excited about its exploration.

My name is Yonus James Harris and I am a sophomore at the University of Michigan majoring in Aerospace Engineering. I grew up in a middle-class home in a comfortable and stable environment where I was encouraged to dream big and work hard. My parents pushed me to do my best as they grew up with limited choices and wanted more for me than they experienced. My Dad works at a paint shop for Chrysler, my Mom is a nurse, and they want me to live my best life, even if it means leaving footprints on the moon.

What struggles have made you strong?

I was a shy kid in middle school, and while I did have friends, I was introverted and self-limited my experiences. During high school I pushed myself to do more, experience more. Not only did I become more social but I also joined more groups, such as marching band and mock trial. I also joined volunteer organizations, such as National Honors Society and Key Club. Through these experiences, I saw high school through a different lens—a social lens that I really enjoyed. In fact, my newly discovered social life propelled me to a higher level of competition and I graduated 11th out of 480 classmates. As a top student, I applied and was accepted into my dream school, the University of Michigan. It was my dream school because of its excellent engineering programs and reputation.

I entered Michigan with tremendous expectation and enthusiasm; eager to learn to be an aerospace engineer. It was amazing, I was introduced to the M-Stem program where I met lots of new friends and many businesses/organizations partnered with the program. Not only have I been introduced to many new friends at the college be-

fore I started my freshman year, but I was able to talk and gather expertise from many different professionals with varying experiences of their own.

But when the 2020 pandemic began, like many others my new social world came to an abrupt end as we were all sent home to take classes remotely. Remote classes not only discontinued my newfound social life, it completely disrupted my study process and forced me to find ways to use technology to redefine how I managed my study process. Zoom TA sessions, GroupMe, GoogleMeet, all became my new study aides. But I have to admit, the transition was painful—it still is. The absence of physical meetings with my TAs, professors, and fellow students is maddening at times.

How has the GlobalMindED/ELE Ambassador Program and Leadership Program influenced your professional path?

In spite of the major changes in my educational process, I’m excited to be a GlobalMinded Ambassador. Through Participation in the GlobalMindED Inclusive Leadership Program, I not only have an avenue to an incredible amount of opportunities from the GlobalMindED team, I also get the joy of talking to many people from different backgrounds and walks of life. From meeting my mentor introduced through the program, Lisa Neal-Graves, I have already learned the value of sharing my story and I am certain that I will gain a lot more insight and wisdom from her that will surely positively affect my career path—from both my mentor and the program as a whole going forward.

What is special about you that an employer can’t live without? How will you set a new standard for the job, once hired?

Taking in the lessons learned from my own experiences as well as others, I will always strive to do my best. Through hard work, determination, and a strong will, I have always strived to achieve my goals, as this is the way of an Engineer. I will continue to learn and commit to hard work, always trying to make a positive change, and whether this change is large or small, a drop of water can ripple throughout an entire ocean.



What is your personal story?

Greetings everyone! My Name is Sochima Ifedikwa. I am an international student from Nigeria studying Computer Science in the United States. I am a first-generation student, and I recently graduated from San Jacinto Community College with an Associate's degree in Computer Science. I am currently a transfer student pursuing a bachelor's degree at Texas Tech University. I also intend to go into the accelerated degree program to gain a master's degree in Software Engineering.

What struggles have made you strong?

As a first-generation college student, unique circumstances have shaped my path. My life has not been easy, but two qualities have remained firm—my tenacity in the face of challenging circumstances to seek higher education, and my determination to perform tasks efficiently to achieve my goals.

I would never have imagined myself today as being a college graduate because there is no easy route to getting to success. Due to the financial constraint of my family, at the age of 5 I was sent to live with my grand aunt, who financed most of my elementary education. As she aged, she could no longer care for me, so I moved to a different city to live with an uncle at the age of 9 through high school. While living with him, I occasionally visited my family during the holidays, and went back to live with my mother after I had graduated high school, pending admission to college. Before I came to the United States, my goal had always been to get a good education so that I can help my mother and siblings live a better life. As the first child of my family, and the first to enter college, it is a responsibility that weighs



on my shoulders—not as a burden but as my source of motivation. I have a mother who is hearing impaired but she has always been proud of who she is. I learned that no matter the disability that one has, there is always something valuable they can contribute. With training and constant practice with my mother, my siblings

and I were able to learn how to be sign language interpreters, which is a skill that has always made me stand out from my peers.

How has the GlobalMindED/ELE Ambassador Program and Leadership Program influenced your professional path?

I am proud to be an Alumni of San Jacinto College, a college that was accepting and exposed me to different programs that have shaped me to be a better person in the past few years. I am most grateful for being a member of the Diverse Student Population that introduced me to the GlobalMindED Community, which gave me the opportunity to represent minority and First-Generation international students on a bigger level. The skills and trainings provided in collaboration with the different networking opportunities are qualities that are very relevant in all organizations. The GlobalMindED community imbibes the idea of diversity and inclusion in a wide range because it encourages growth. I am an ambassador of this notion because the experience with the GlobalMindED program has helped instill the idea of teamwork, which is a necessity in my field of study. I am very happy that I can use this skill in my classrooms, and will also use it later in my future employment.

What is special about you that an employer can't live without? How will you set a new standard for the job, once hired?

As a computer science student, my aim is to work for a technological company as a software engineer and developer. I think that I would be the best candidate for a job because I am a diverse and inclusive leader that believes that everyone is important and has something to offer, regardless of their background. Something very unique about me that an employer cannot live without is that I am always a cheerful person who tries as much as possible to carry everyone along with me. I try to make sure that my teammates are in a good mood and full of good energy, because I know that happiness is always within all of us. Once I get hired, the best way I know how to set a new standard is effective communication and paying attention to all ideas. By doing this, I will make sure that I learn things from another person's perspective and point of view, hence promoting diversity and inclusion.



What is your personal story?

I was born lucky, with a passion for learning and an arrogance that got me through 12 years of public education in one piece. I completed about half my education in the Navajo Nation, the tribe I am born for. Then, at about 12 years old, I moved off the reservation and eventually finished my high school diploma in suburbia.

Right now I am in a Bachelor's degree program in Anthropology with a minor in Journalism and Multimedia Studies. What I hope to do is create media, primarily videos, that educate people on the many ways of being human—namely, language and media across time and space.

What struggles have made you strong?

There is so much more to human nature than what our public education system is willing to teach. The schools I attended on the reservations were not always focused on creating the most well rounded student possible. I understand why, with so many of their students facing issues outside the classroom. Issues that make getting a quality education less important. When I moved to Denver, then Mesa, the education was leagues above what I received on the reservation.

The outlooks on education before and after leaving the reservation were a stark contrast. However, the greatest lesson I learned was how much money mattered when it came to getting a well rounded education.

It was difficult understanding how hard my family's circumstances were growing up but it became clear when I started interacting with my peers in college. Many could afford housing, books, expensive laptops and cars. They had houses to go back to for break with bedrooms that will always be theirs—each of my trips home were laced with uncertainty. Many did not worry about their family while at school. I had thoughts of dropping out so that I could be another leg of support. Nothing was as jolting as realizing how different the lives my peers are living from me.

What are your biggest passions in life?

In such a polarized world, giving people a source for diverse cultures is desperately needed to broaden the social consciousness. It is ridiculous how easy it is to fall into a

constant feedback loops of one's ideas nowadays with algorithms aimed to create echo chambers. There is a need to leave the chamber and take a few steps back. What I am most concerned with is making sure the public is as educated as possible about issues that affect them directly. Education is at war with media when really, the two should work together.

What do you look forward to most in your life after school?

There are already many successful edutainment channels and companies, all born online. I would like to add to this vast reservoir of quality public education. The world needs fierce and passionate educators, willing to go the distance. If there is anything I can do, it is share my love for humans and culture, and maybe inspire others to do the same. Working with the GlobalMinded Community and those at Fort Lewis College as well as my Native networks, I look forward to achieving and exceeding my ambitions.





What is your personal story?

I am Deandre “Dre” Lee, and I am from Ahoskie, NC. I am a first-generation college student coming from a low-income area. I spent most of my life living in Northampton County, a rural county with few resources or opportunities. I grew up with a single mother, and she inspired me to share my story.

As a child, I lived in a rural area with a high poverty rate; my family lived in poverty for decades, and we were often homeless, sometimes living with other people to get by. Our poverty contributed to many of my mental health issues, and it caused me to suffer from depression and anxiety. It was traumatic to watch my mom struggle and work multiple jobs to survive daily. I made it my goal to use the school as a gateway to make my life better.

I decided to take school seriously and attend North Carolina Central University to major in social work. During my time, I lost many close people, including my great grandmother Helen Bell. I struggled with maintaining a personal life while being a college student. Still, I had to adjust to balancing schoolwork, working more than one job, providing for myself and my family, and prioritizing my time with several organizations. With many trials, I graduated in the Fall of 2020 with a Bachelor of Social Work, receiving the student service impact award and Magna Cum Laude. I knew I made the right choice finishing school, despite the many times I wanted to give up. I hope to inspire many people with my personal story, and inspire others in life based on my life story. I currently work at the Salvation Army in my field as a caseworker, using direct practice in social work. I want to attend graduate school to become a college professor and therapist.

What struggles have made you strong?

My struggles with growing up in poverty made me a strong individual. Nobody in my circle influenced me to attend college and made a difference in my life. I learned the value of hard work and dedication after watching my mom work multiple jobs so my siblings and I could have what we need. My biggest concern was repeating the cycle and living my life like her when I become an adult. I value being independent, and it motivates me to work hard for what I need in my life. Throughout many struggles I have encountered, I never realized the obstacles I

overcame. I always sold myself short, but I never gave up on my dream of wanting to be successful. I have a long way to go, but I am very determined to be a therapist and an excellent social worker.

How has the GlobalMindED/ELE Ambassador Program and Leadership Program influenced your professional path?

The GlobalMindED Inclusive Leadership Program influenced my professional path greatly. The staff members’ support is phenomenal, and I’m grateful for all the opportunities that developed my mindset on accomplishing my goals. My professional mentor, Ashley, is my challenger and champion—so I can be my best in all areas of life. GlobalMindED has done a remarkable job expressing the equity gap’s concern and creating a capable, diverse talent pipeline through connections to role models, mentors, internships for low-income students, and returning adults. Their motive to support first-generation students motivated me to apply to become an Ambassador to further share my voice. With this opportunity granted, I can better realize my goals of working with first-generation college students in my future career. I look forward to sharing what I have been given with other people, especially people who can relate to me and my story.





What is your personal story?

When going for a job interview, I always get asked the same question: What is your biggest strength? My answer is always the same. My Grit is my biggest strength. According to Merriam-Webster, Grit is “firmness of mind or spirit: unyielding courage in the face of hardship or danger.”

My name is Serita Liles. I am currently a senior at North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University majoring in Sport Science and Fitness Management. In my life, I have seen my fair share of hardship. But for the purpose of this newsletter, I want to speak on the recent events that have brought challenge to my life as a young African American woman.

What struggles have made you strong?

Upon my return to the States from studying abroad, positive cases of Coronavirus started to sweep our nation. This is what we know today as the 2020 Pandemic. However, we currently face two pandemics in America: Coronavirus and Racism. Although less talked about, systemic racism is a public health problem and it's not just recent. What if I told you that doctors in the 1950s decided to test the beginning stages of birth control on low-income women in Puerto Rico, a U.S. territory? What if I told you that black people living in America are two times more likely to die of cardiovascular disease, one of the top fatal diseases in America? This topic is extremely controversial. However, this perspective, especially as a byproduct of what it means to be a woman of color in America, is what fuels my grit.

2020 was hard for many of us, but for me, it was filled with mixed emotions of what it means to be a black American and what it means to be human. How do I distance myself from worldly chaos and find solace? I chose to focus my mind on positivity. I chose to go vegetarian. I chose to read the Bible more often. I chose to exercise and meditate. But most importantly, I chose to focus on peace. It's easy to get angry at today's current events and hate the actions of insensitive citizens. But what will that solve?

How has the GlobalMindED/ELE Ambassador Program and Leadership Program influenced your professional path?

Attending the GlobalMindED virtual conference and follow up meeting calls encouraged me to take the mental fog of today's madness and find a healthy way to cope. I mentioned plenty of times during our zoom calls that I was so focused on the effects of 2020, I had very little time for myself. The GlobalMindED team has really help me prioritize myself throughout 2020.

What are your biggest passions in life?

Starting a new chapter into the new year, I am keeping my mental health at the forefront. With the recent events that has happened at the U.S Capital, I cannot minimize how much it has affected me. But I can say, it has made me that much hungrier to achieve greatness because civil injustice in America is intolerable. My fight may not be political, but I am working my hardest to produce change in healthcare within the years to come.





What is your personal story?

I am an immigrant. I came to this country when I was around five years old. Although I was not raised as an immigrant, I still remember my journey here and my mother's purpose for embarking on this journey. Around the same time I moved to New Jersey from Cuba, my mother was going through a divorce with my father and decided to find the strength to come to this country alone as a single mother to give me a better life and a better future. Throughout my years and childhood, I was a very independent person, and I was that kid involved in everything. At one point, I was in every club in school because I wanted to gain a different perspective. My entire life, I have done everything. I have done theater, dance, I have been in a Spanish club, I have contributed to my community in any way I possibly can. I got my first job at 14, and that job was campaigning. My mother, at first, did not agree with that job, but I really wanted the experience because I felt that I wanted to be an independent person, so she let me work. During my time campaigning, I learned a lot. I also learned that I never wanted to do politics again. I did that job for roughly three years, and I left on a good note, and I thought that everything the job had to offer me, it did.

What struggles have made you strong?

I would say my biggest struggle is saying no. The word no is not an easy one for me to say, and I tried to take on a lot because I want to help others, but then I get to the point where I am very overwhelmed. I am a student that works almost full-time hours. I hold a leadership position, and I'm also in a sorority, Lambda Tau Omega Sorority, Inc. I tried to give my all to everything and even spread myself thin, but there comes a point where I need to start using the word no to really prioritize work that I need to do. By saying yes to everything, I have found myself to be overworked and overloaded and not having enough time in a day to catch up. For me, mental health days were very nonexistent for a very long time, but then I realize that I can't continue like this, and others also have to do their part. By learning to say no, I learned to prioritize and to understand that even though I wish I could do everything in the world, I have other people, and I have a whole network of people I can

reach out to. Learning to say no, I learned to ask for help which I would say was one of my biggest weaknesses. I've always thought that saying the word no would mean I'm a selfish person, but it means that I understand my limits.

How has the GlobalMindED/ELE Ambassador Program and Leadership Program influenced your professional path?

The global minded program has offered immense opportunities to network and to get connected with people from different areas and students from different colleges. We all want to strive to be successful and are student leaders who connect with our college community every day and want to see it succeed. This program has helped me want to continue advocating more and working hard towards what I see needs to be handled in my community. By talking with my global minded peers, I see significant problems across the board happening for me here in New Jersey and happening across the country. For them, I see that there are problems that we perceive to be small or bigger than what we think they are. It is a community of people wanting success and changes for the community and a better college campus. For my professional path, I want to focus on a lot of advocacy work, and I want to do a lot of work for people to help people and this program and this leadership opportunity takes me in the right direction.

What is special about you that an employer can't live without? How will you set a new standard for the job, once hired?

I am a resilient worker. I give my heart to a company and answer my employer. I believe that it is essential to work hard and to be a moving part of the team. I believe in challenging systems that are present and that no longer work. I believe in being thorough, asking questions, and seeing things from different perspectives. Yes, I am an over-analyzer, but I analyze to understand and to really see the bigger picture. I love to ask questions and see what I can do to contribute more and in what ways I can be more beneficial to the team that I am in. My standards are always to be my best. I cannot be perfect because we all make mistakes but to give all I can possibly as a human being. To give my entire heart to a job and to the community in that workplace because everyone succeeds together.



What is your personal story?

I am Native American, raised by a single mother and grandmother, not entirely connected to the culture and people of my homeland. I began to set my own goals, work on myself, and forge my own identity. I cultivated my ideas of responsibility while away from and within my home, helping around the house while my mother and grandmother were working. With no supervision, I had to bring myself to the expectations of my family, and even more so when I attended boarding school as I maintained my studies as well as independent living.

What struggles have made you strong?

This is not my only struggle however, early in my high school career, I was afflicted with sickness: Pneumonia, which quickly developed Steven-Johnson's Syndrome. This confined me to a bed for a month in a hospital where every day I had to subject myself to extreme pain to even eat. That month of isolation from all friends and most of my family, along with my growing distance from my studies taught me a great deal of optimism and perseverance as I had to learn lessons without much guidance from teachers. This also instilled within me an ability to learn and comprehend important and valuable topics quickly and employ them just as quickly. I use the same skills now to constantly seek ways to improve and overcome any obstacle I may face. Not only has this incident taught me a great deal of discipline, but also allowed me to press my emotions and anxieties into song and creative outlets, helping to guide me to the path I walk today as a musician and eventual music therapist.

I had begun my musical self-training a few years before this, practicing guitar lightly with a good friend of mine and learning how to play with various YouTube videos. But after this friend left, and I was alone, the isolation and intensity of the situation brought music and, in particular, singing to the forefront. I practiced more and more often until I was able to leave my isolation, and continued, finding solace in it as I had during my time in my emergency room.

What is special about you that an employer can't live without? How will you set a new standard for the job, once hired?

These experiences have shaped who I am as an independent, free-thinking, responsible, and creative student. I hope to hold my peers to the same standards, pushing them to succeed when they feel downtrodden, showing the light within the dark, and hopefully granting them the courage and support they need to carry on. Fostering honesty and authenticity as I do so.

These traits, along with the determination, optimism, and discipline learned from my various struggles are those that are quite desired in all working fields, and I shall carry these through any job I may find myself in. In addition, my music training and work will grant me certain creativity that is not found in most other people, a trait that can be invaluable in most fields.





What is your personal story?

I am a first-generation college student from a low-income family in Wheeling, West Virginia, and I am currently enrolled as a Biochemistry major at West Virginia University. I come from a family riddled with opiate, alcohol, and gambling addictions and grew up in a rather hostile environment. School and extracurriculars quickly became my escape from home, and I have been fortunate to have had many amazing friends, teachers, and mentors along the way who have helped me get this far in life. Two of my high school science teachers acknowledged my aptitude for analytical thinking, particularly with chemistry, and urged me to take more STEM classes during my time in high school. Fast-forward to senior year, and I am applying into the Biochemistry program at WVU from which I am about to graduate.

Since being in college, I have actively been participating in undergraduate research as well as being a student director for First2 Network: an NSF INCLUDES Alliance which aims to double the retention rate of first-generation, underrepresented students in STEM programs. I am currently an undergrad research assistant in the forest pathology and mycology lab in the Davis College at WVU. As I am about to graduate, I intend to take a gap year before graduate school in order to gain some work experience or participate in AmeriCorps. Once I am ready to apply to graduate school, I am looking to apply to plant pathology/environmental microbiology programs on the east coast and southeast.

What struggles have made you strong?

Due to the environment I grew up in, I suffer from depression, anxiety, and PTSD. Periodic homelessness, health concerns, unstable family relationships, and more have shaped me into who I am now. I did not have control over the circumstances of my life for a long time, and I was forced to adapt and overcome. When hearing my story, many consider me to be a strong individual, but I'd like to vouch for those—like myself—who do not feel as though their trauma has made them “strong”. I have come out bruised and battered like many others with lives similar to mine. Being the victim of an emotional abuser and narcissist has caused much grief and sadness in my life as I struggle with interpersonal relationships, self-worth, and trust.

However, what I do believe makes me “strong” is my ability to recognize that what happened to me is in the past, and I must keep going forward and shape my own life without the weight of an abuser's actions on my shoulders. I have persevered and am creating my ideal life whatever obstacles stand in my way. I am learning to form healthy connections again, as well as setting boundaries with the abusers in my life. I am extremely grateful to all of the people in my life who have supported me and loved me unconditionally so that I am able to be where I am today.

How has the GlobalMinded/ELE Ambassador Program and Leadership Program influenced your professional path?

Both First2 and GlobalMinded have taught me that I have a valuable voice that is worthy of being heard. I have learned to speak up for myself and hope to include that quality in my professional life. While I wish to continue on in academia with research, I would also like to stay involved in re-shaping education and speaking up for those that are underrepresented. Perhaps someday this will lead me to being a dean or chairperson at a college!

Why would you be the strongest candidate for any job? What is special about you that an employer can't live without?

I am adaptable and resilient. I have always made do with what I have, and made the best out of every situation. Even when I feel I can't go on anymore or finish a task, I somehow still find motivation within me to push through to the finish line. In addition, I am committed to being a life-long learner. As school has always been my escape, I consistently love to be learning new things and be exposed to new challenges.





What is your personal story?

My roots and humble beginning started in Moss Point, MS, at the bottom of the Mississippi and a block away from the Gulf of Mexico. I come from a very mixed Southern culture, better known as the “Dirty South”. My environment handed me many challenges; from being bullied, living in the midst of a high crime rate, and raised by “family”—life was different. Yet, it stimulated my growth. These challenges pushed me to discover my own divine talents—one of which is basketball, something I have loved since I can remember. Basketball was a discovered talent that helped me discover other “talents”. Basketball was my way out of having a troubled life.

What struggles made you strong?

When I started school, there was the “blueprint” label that was attached to me by people, based on my parental situation. So I had to fight through labels and projected assumptions from my peers. I had to stand up for myself throughout school. Being on an island built my character. It gave me perseverance and a sense of purpose. Mainly, the self motivation that I have has gotten me really far. It has been my saving grace and my hope to become the person I am designed to be.

How has the GlobalMindED/ELE Ambassador Program and Leadership Program influenced your professional path?

I joined this program this past year. I attended the GlobalMindED conference in 2019. It left an everlasting impression on me. This Student Ambassador program has inspired and motivated my professional path. I’ve always had a dream of how I want my career path to go; the Ambassador program fueled that dream. What influenced me the most was the humble beginnings of most of the entrepreneurs. I was able to familiarize and identify with many of them. It helped me see that my struggles don’t determine my future, and that I am just as deserving as the next person.

What are your biggest passions in life?

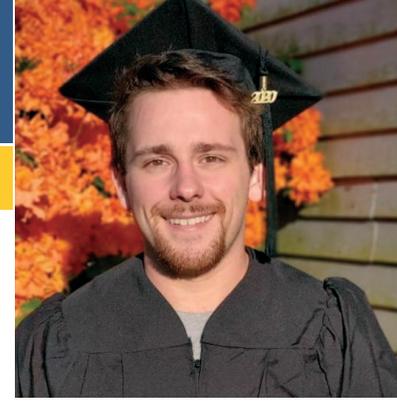
My biggest passion is to become a professional basketball player.

The pandemic brought on unfortunate circumstances, to where I had to put my aspiration on pause. It isn’t the end for me though—just a bump in the road that I have to work around. I have had this dream since I was a toddler. I have dedicated years of my life to this beautiful craft. When it’s God given, it is a craft in my eyes. I trained this recent summer with a professional trainer. It was one of the best experiences ever! I plan to keep my options open if there is a chance thrown my way.

What do you look forward to most in your life after school?

I look forward to becoming an athletic trainer while I play pro ball. I look forward to doing both at the same time. I want to join a graduate program so I can get my certification. Most importantly I look forward to a stable happy life. I want to have emotional and mental stability. I feel this is so important to have a sound mind and vision for your career and life. Mental health is so important to me. It is a must that you have a sense of stability to complete any and all of your endeavors.





What is your personal story?

I am Conner Sturgeon, and my story is one of growth from challenge and overcoming. Growing up in a rural, lower socioeconomic, single-mother household, you are not presented with many opportunities. From witnessing and being a part of abuse, drugs, violence, and depression, I was able to find hope, strength, passion, and love. I graduated high school as an average student who was highly involved during those four years. I was in musicals, sports, clubs, and more, and maintained a job and slightly above average grades. From this, I was able to earn the 21st Century Scholarship through the state of Indiana, and that is what aided me to attend college. I went to the University of Southern Indiana and obtained my Bachelor of Social Work. I learned more than I could have ever imagined in the classroom, but what I learned through TRIO, Student Support Services, Lambda Chi Alpha, and all the other clubs and organizations that I was part of held more weight. It showed me dedication, service, and humility and furthered my ability to love others.

What struggles have made you strong?

The first struggle that I remember was in early middle school. My parents had been divorced for around a year, and my mother became incredibly ill. As her health declined and she endured multiple surgeries, I was unsure how to cope with this and the divorce. Wrestling became my outlet, and other sports followed. Then I discovered it was not necessarily the sport itself; despite them being great outlets for my emotions, it was also the people and the support that came with it.

Another struggle was my transition to college life. In high school, I was surrounded by people I knew. Once I got to college, that immediately changed. I did not have the friends or support that I had become so accustomed to. I pushed myself to be involved and found outlets of interest. This was when I discovered my first and largest support at college—my fraternal brothers whom I consider to be true family. They helped me to push my boundaries and grow because I had a safety net of support behind me.

How has the GlobalMindED/ELE Ambassador Program and Leadership Program influenced your professional path?

First as a GlobalMindED First Gen Leader, and then as I was given the honor to be a GlobalMindED/ELE Ambassador, I have had many more avenues of professional exposure which I could not have imagined. At my undergrad, my horizons opened. After working with GlobalMindED on this project and a few others, I have made connections with individuals worldwide. I can ask questions, find different perspectives, and educate myself on all these possibilities that I once had no clue were there. The main thing that this Ambassador Program has reinforced is that I want to work serving others.

What would make you the strongest candidate for the job?

I believe that I would be the strongest candidate for any position because I am extremely dedicated to whatever I am working on, and I want to see whatever that is through to completion. Also, I work not only for myself but for others—I want to help those around me through service, education, and sharing my platform. I have a very optimistic outlook on situations, which helps when dealing with any difficult problems. Finally, I am eager to learn. If I am not sure how something is done I am not afraid to ask, and then I get an education on something I am not versed in doing. This also helps me dive into tasks and work projects that I may not be the most experienced in.

Flexibility, resilience, and the ability to adapt are the things that I bring to the table that any employer can benefit from. I love a challenge in the workplace, and because of that, I have always sought those challenges out. In doing this, I have learned how to hone these skills and apply them to any situation.

Once I have been hired into a position, I always seek out a conversation with my boss regarding the position's work expectations and duties. In doing this, I can create a baseline of achievement for myself and how I will benefit the company. That baseline is always a set of goals that I want to achieve while working. I strive to push myself to perform at the highest capacity that I am capable of doing.



What is your personal story?

My name is Jessica Thompson, and I'm a second-year nursing student at Linfield University in McMinnville, Oregon. Currently, I am working towards earning my Bachelor of Science in Nursing, and my lifelong career goal is to become a Certified Nursing Midwife (CNM) with my Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP). I have lived in Canby, OR my entire life, and I identify as a first generation college student. Last year I participated as a mentee in Linfield University's First Scholars Program, and I am now a student coordinator and mentor for the program.

What struggles have made you strong?

One of the main struggles that I have faced during my life is being a first generation college student. I grew up as an only child with just my mom, and she did not have all the answers to the questions I had about college and pursuing a nursing career. This experience has challenged me to seek out the answers to my questions and to ask for help when I need it. One example of a challenge I faced as a first generation college student was understanding what a normal college student's life looked like. I had a difficult time finding the correct balance between classes and social events. During my first semester of college, I focused mainly on my classwork. While my grades did reflect all the hard work I put into them, I was having a troublesome time forming strong friendships. After my first semester, I decided that I had to find the right balance that worked for my college life so that I would be successful socially and academically. Learning how to be self-sufficient as a first generation college student has made me an overall stronger person.

How has the GlobalMindED/ELE Ambassador Program and Leadership Program influenced your professional path?

The Ambassador Program and the GlobalMindED Leadership Program have positively influenced my professional path by encouraging me to expand my outlook for my future. At the beginning of this school year, I was set on only getting my BSN, but now I am considering obtaining my DNP. Because of the classes I took during the

fall semester and this program, I am now thinking about specializing as a nurse. Being in college and getting to be in the GlobalMindED program has made me realize that there is always more that I can do in life, if/when I choose to do it.

What is special about you that an employer can't live without? How will you set a new standard for the job, once hired?

I would be the strongest candidate for any job because I am independent and passionate about my work. Growing up with a single parent and my experience as a first generation college student have shaped my independence. One thing that is special about me that an employer cannot live without is the amount of passion that I carry with me. Science, medicine, and helping people are some of my greatest passions in life. As a future nurse, I know that my employers will see the passion that drives my work and focus.

Once hired, I will set a new standard of excellence in nursing by using my knowledge and passion to care for my patients.

What do you look forward to most in your life after school?

One aspect of the nursing field that frustrates me is the amount of information patients receive from their medical professionals without the proper explanation. I can personally compare this to being a first generation student. All high school students receive a lot of information about what they can do with their future, but not enough of the students know what to do with that information. I found this to be very confusing and challenging at times, and patients should not have to experience this. When I enter the workforce as a nurse, I will do my best to explain a patient's condition to them and their family in simple terms. This step in patient care allows the patient to put more trust and confidence in the medical care they are receiving. I would also encourage my peers and co-workers to try to do the same with their patients. If more medical professionals took the time to do this with their patients, the medical field could see even more success than it already is.



What is your personal story?

I came to this country as a refugee in 2004 with a single mother who raised me in the Denver/Aurora area. I struggled with social anxiety in high school. It became hard for me to focus on and establish relationships in high school. I graduated high school with a 1.6 GPA, where I felt like my life was over and that I'd never be successful. I took some time after high school to work and get my mind in the right place.

How has the GlobalMindED/ELE Ambassador Program and Leadership Program influenced your professional path?

I attended the Community College of Denver (CCD), where I heard about GlobalMindED. After our first day of workshops, I connected with Adrian Rosado, Rocio Perez, and Dr. Melinda Cain. During our Intercultural competence training, Melinda saw my scores from the personality tests we took and said that she saw something special in me. She recognized a devoted leader and revolutionary within me, which is something I never saw in myself. Then, Rocio helped me realize that energy is essential, and my thoughts are powerful. She helped me own my story so I could fill the room with confidence and charisma. Adrian helped me learn how to network and be a connector.

The exposure and training from the GlobalMindED First Gen leadership program in 2018 was life-changing for me. The leadership program was healing and revealing; in a sense, it liberated me. It freed me from the misconceptions of my identity and broke down stereotypes and false mental barriers I created for myself. It allowed me to discover myself for who I was, a student who was first in his family to go to college, a student with a compelling story, and a student who was born to lead. The connections I made at the conference continue to pay off and amplify my memory of attending. This exposure allowed me to dive deep into my identity and own it, and helped me develop skills that continue to change my life. It helped me see being first gen as a superpower and not a disadvantage.

Before this event, I held no titles or awards, or positions. After the conference, I was elected President of the National Society of Leadership and Success serving 1000+ members at CCD. I was awarded the New Outstanding Student Award and was the only black male to receive

the Colorado Community College System (CCCS) Rising Star Award that same year. Currently, I sit on the Colorado State Board for Community Colleges and Occupational Education. I chaired the State Student Advisory Council representing over 137,000 students on the state and national level.

I still talk to my friends from all over the world whom I met during the GlobalMindED conference. Those experiences gave me a different perspective on life and helped me tap into a version of myself I never knew existed. Everyone I met at the event aided me on my journey to success in a way unimaginable and unforgettable. I graduated from the Community College of Denver with a 3.72 GPA and my Associates in Computer Information Systems. I graduated with a multitude of awards and full-ride offers, proving to my high school self that anything you put your mind to is possible. I was also recently selected by the Obama Foundation and The City and County of Denver to receive the My Brother's Keeper–Emerging Leader Award.

What would make you the strongest candidate for the job?

I believe that I would be the strongest candidate for any position because I have exceptional experience in leadership and team building, with excellent communication and emotional intelligence skills. I've planned my time at school and extracurriculars around what I believe will make me a leader in any industry. I've also interned at a top tech company where I learned valuable skills such as data analysis and critical thinking. I'm currently studying Computer Information Systems, gaining the technical knowledge I need to know while building the soft skills that will lead me to excel in any role.





What is your personal story?

Strong versus strength. They may sound the same, but there is a difference. My name is Kyra Welch, and I hail from the wonderful city of Louisville, Kentucky. I am a second-year psychology student at the illustrious Bethune-Cookman University.

What struggles have made you strong?

“Strong” is a word that has been used to describe me my entire life. When I was called strong at the age of eight, it was because I could lift up my mother using all of the power in my body. However, at the age of ten, the word strong had lost all of its physical connotations. In the span of two years I had gone from lifting my mother to show her my strength, to having to lift her name in the light of injustice. The kind of strength some people never have to channel within their entire lifetime.

In 2011, I lost my mother to police brutality. Present day it is so common, it almost sounds like I lost her to an illness. But police brutality isn’t a disease, it is a crime. That day a mother was gunned down in front of her two children. I was ten at the time and my brother was six. She wasn’t just my mother she was my mentor, guide, light, and superhero. Much like a real superhero I thought she was invincible. Despite the trauma I had witnessed that day, I still believed that she’d fly in from the magical planet of Virgos and resume her motherly duties. I prayed that I had been a part of some sort of social experiment.

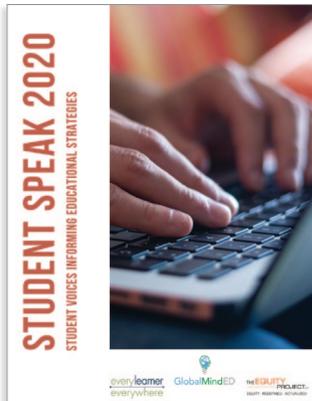
The thing about being a witness to a crime so heinous, is that people look at you in so many different ways. I was a victim, a witness, and a mouthpiece. A victim that was robbed of her single mother, a witness who had to give depositions to grown men trying to win a legal case (only to settle and still have to find a way to pay for college years later), and a mouth piece for an uncreated black lives matter movement. Before Black Lives Matter officially became a thing, 11-year-old me was speaking on local panels to share my story. It didn’t receive the traction of course but it felt like I was doing what needed to be done. I didn’t feel like a witness, I felt like a warrior. In the early on stages I would hate being

told I was strong. I didn’t want to be strong, I wanted to cry like a child who lost their mother because I was a child who indeed had just lost their mother.

What would make you the strongest candidate for the job?

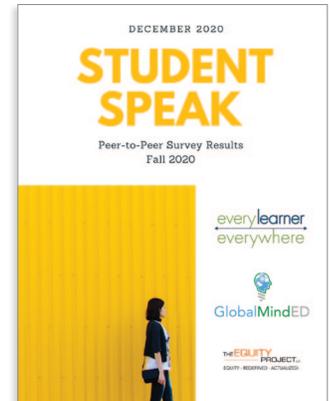
The funny thing about strength is that you don’t get to choose when it develops. It just happens. And when it happens you become unstoppable. And that is exactly what I’ve become. My high school years were filled with fighting and being a mouthpiece for injustice. Instead of a victim I was victorious. And I still am. Although I have taken a break from the physical fight, I have begun the fight for peace in the mind. Along with my studies in psychology, I am also on my spiritual journey. This journey has helped me realize that healing the soul as well as the mind is crucial to living a meaningful life. A principle I hope to carry over into my career (as soon as I narrow it down). Anyways, the point is that strength doesn’t have to be brooding or loud. It is an inner power that we channel when we least expect it. Don’t waste all of your strength trying to show people you are strong.





Student Speak 2020: 102 students from 47 schools in 22 states were interviewed for 90 minutes in Summer 2020. Questions centered around their online learning experiences during the Spring semester of 2020. Topics included COVID, police brutality and racial issues, what made online learning difficult, what worked, how they felt about learning online, what support they received from their school, and if they trusted that digital learning tools were created in a way that gave every student an equal opportunity to succeed.

Students Speak—Peer to Peer Survey: The peer to peer model was designed to augment the Student Speak 2020 report. The goal was to leverage a similar line of questioning as was used in the original report while leveraging an opportunity to expand to an even larger number of student voices. 270 students responded with in-depth answers to the questions.



The Project Catalysts



DR. JESSICA ROWLAND WILLIAMS joined Every Learner Everywhere in October 2019. Prior to this role, she served as the Completion Grant Initiative project director for University Innovation Alliance. She also worked as program director in Georgia State University's Office of the Senior Vice President of Student Success. Prior to those roles, Williams was a diversity fellow at Princeton University's Office of Academic Affairs and Diversity, as well as program coordinator for the Princeton Summer Undergraduate Research Experience (PSURE). She holds a Ph.D. and an M.A. in Molecular Biology from Princeton University, and a Bachelor of Science in Biology from Spelman College. Through her personal and educational experiences, Jessica developed a passion for improving student outcomes among minoritized and poverty-affected students. Jessica has devoted her career to advocating for equitable outcomes in U.S. higher education through advances in digital learning and student-centered teaching practices.



CAROL CARTER is a national and international student success author, speaker, and entrepreneur. She began her career in college publishing with Prentice Hall, and became the first female assistant vice president and director of college marketing at age 26. Later, as V.P. and publisher, she developed the widely acclaimed Keys to Success series to help college students connect their academic success to their future professional success. Carol's business experience and her international work help shape her unique perspective on how institutions of learning, youth development, and businesses can prepare students from all backgrounds and levels of learning to thrive in an increasingly complex world. In 2014 she founded GlobalMindED to bring together leaders in education, government, business, and social enterprise committed to improving access and equity to education, employment and health.



DR. DWINITA MOSBY TYLER is the Chief Catalyst and Founder of The Equity Project, LLC—a consulting firm founded in 2016 to support organizations across the globe develop strategies to advance equity, inclusion and diversity in all that they do. Before launching The Equity Project, she held Senior Executive roles in the field of Human Resources—including the Executive Director of Human Resources for the City and County of Denver and the Senior VP of Human Resources and Chief Inclusion Officer at Children's Hospital Colorado. She holds a Ph.D. from the University of Colorado, an M.A. in Management from Webster University and a B.A. in Education from the University of Alabama.



What mentors say about mentoring their GlobalMinded / ELE Student Ambassadors . . .

“My mentee has clear goals for the future and has most of the steps in place to achieve his shorter-term goals as well. I think that we have connected and built an open relationship. I have learned that I don’t always have to try to have all the answers or have a problem to solve for my mentee. Sometimes he just wants someone to chat with and even in casual catch up conversations he may gain new insights along the way. Overall, this is a great experience and I’m excited to be involved.”

—MARGO

“The ability to give back to those who are in the early stages of their journey has been incredibly rewarding. Zoher and I continue to put in the necessary time and effort to ensure that he receives the most value possible out of the program. We have completely rebuilt his resume, performed mock interviews, trained on interpersonal communication skills, discussed his career aspirations following graduation, and parsed my network with the end goal focused on him finding and securing a position in the workforce before or shortly after the date of his graduation.”

—JOE

“Per advice early on, I send Jules an email about a week before we meet with a few questions I’d like to talk about during our meeting. He always comes prepared and has clearly given some thought to those questions. I think we both appreciate having this structure.”

—ANDREA

“(I enjoy learning the) perspective from Kyra’s experiences and I enjoy connecting with people from across the country that come from different backgrounds. It’s an invaluable learning experience.”

—BEATRICE

“It has been so rewarding working with such a young, accomplished student that has a vision to help people in any way that he can. Every time we connect, Hector teaches me how to be a better coach. Even though it has been a difficult time living through Covid, he shows up ready to learn and grow and his perseverance and tenacity to overcome and rise up in difficult times inspires me to show up better every day and keep pushing myself to find my own greatness too.”

—SHANNON

Any questions?

Feel free to email us at caroljcarter@globalminded.org or nita@theequityprojectllc.com

every learner
everywhere



THE EQUITY
PROJECT LLC