

Taylor Patterson

Personal Statement

From the moment my feet leave the pool's edge, I plunge into a world where everything else fades away—my worries, my fears, and even the chorus of cheers from the bleachers. I see swimming as not just a competitive sport, but a medium of self-expression and a lens through which I view my principles of inclusivity, determination, and cultural expression.

For the past three years, I have proudly served as the captain of my school's swim team. Yet, my journey wasn't just about breaking records or securing medals; it was about breaking barriers. I took the initiative to organize workshops aimed at reducing microaggressions and implicit biases within the team, blending my roles as the captain and the head of the LGBTQ+ Alliance at school. My efforts culminated in an environment where every splash and every cheer became a statement of unity.

My passion for creating spaces of inclusivity extends beyond the pool. Through the LGBTQ+ Alliance, I've launched mentoring programs for younger students struggling with identity, mental health, or simply the need for a supportive conversation. I wanted them to know that they could not only survive but thrive, in an environment where everyone's identity is respected.

My family, with its rich tapestry of Caribbean roots, has been a monumental influence on my values. The storytelling sessions during our family gatherings, laden with vibrant characters and moral teachings, were my first encounters with the transformative power of narratives. These inspired me to pen my own short stories—sometimes adventurous, sometimes introspective, but always with the ethos of diversity and acceptance embedded in them.

In my spare time, I find joy in Caribbean dancing. It's more than just a hobby; it's a tribute to my heritage, a complex sequence of steps and rhythms that celebrate my ancestors' resilience. I bring this same vitality and purpose into all areas of my life. Whether I am performing a backstroke or brainstorming with the LGBTQ+ Alliance, I am guided by a commitment to not only respect but to celebrate diversity.

Through my college journey, I aim to continue harmonizing these diverse aspects of my life, utilizing my passion for inclusivity and cultural expression to create spaces that promote genuine dialogue and understanding. In the eloquent words of Audre Lorde, "It is not our differences that divide us. It is our inability to recognize, accept, and celebrate those differences." I am ready to recognize, accept, and celebrate at the next level.