

Brandon Johnson

Foundation scholarship short essays

May 1, 2023

### Short Essays

NSBE, Software Engineering Club, Video Game Club:

I've been an active member of 3 clubs throughout my semesters at university. I currently hold the secretary position at the National Society of Black Engineers (NSBE) at Florida gulf coast university. From my year of experience as a secretary, I've learned the value that clubs like these hold for students; the ability to find communion in an isolating field such as engineering holds more value than what I can express in words, especially for minorities. Organizing and holding group study sessions is a great way to ensure that we hold each other accountable for the work we have to do. In addition to organizing community events, as a secretary, I manage the Club's social media and communication aspects. Sending notifications on our platforms to communicate times for events and dates has gotten me quite familiar with calendar management tools and Microsoft Excel. I've also been able to express my creative talents with flyer-making for events and artwork for posters.

For similar reasons as the NSBE above, I joined the software engineering club for camaraderie. Finding like-minded individuals that can work together and help each other out is paramount to success as a student in university. While I don't hold a leadership position in the Software Engineering club, I assist with planning events, given

my experience with NSBE. I also make full use of their facilities and free assistance with debugging programs.

As for the video game Club, my primary reason for joining was my firm belief that fun and work could coexist even in a major as rigorous as Engineering.

My choice of major is Software Engineering. While I'm invested in learning everything new the field has to offer and passionate about pursuing the creation of things that can make our lives easier, I would be lying if I said the salary wasn't a factor to account for. I chose Software because of its job security and flexibility; the ability to work remotely would allow me the flexibility to plan my work hours. Additionally, remote work will enable me to travel the world without being confined to a strict schedule or management system. My career goals ultimately end with me being financially independent and in good enough standings to be able to open my own video game company. If I could produce games as iconic or memorable as some of my favorite titles growing up, like "Halo" or "Destiny," I would be fulfilled.

With my mother being the household's primary breadwinner, it's evident that the stress is getting to her. Financially things have been tough for my family; going into college after my mother just put an older sibling through a master's degree already left me in a financial deficit. Money often falls short, with only bright futures and grants to rely on. Many events outside of our control have furthered this economic issue; my Aunt and Uncle's recent passing has taken a massive toll on my family both mentally and

financially; my grandmother was already diagnosed with and beat breast cancer thanks to chemotherapy treatments which were extremely costly, in addition to those costs, our family is currently fostering a family of immigrants from Haiti until they can find work in the states.

My grandmother's cancer diagnosis was a crippling moment for us; the thought of losing someone so close was a genuine shock. Naturally, my mom took the initiative to pay for all the check-ins, treatments, medications, etc. She has never really been one to ask for help financially from family members, so naturally, it came from her pockets and hers alone. After we were finally in the clear and my grandmother, the resilient warrior she is, won against breast cancer, we learned that my Uncle Gary had passed away on a trip to Haiti. This death in the family was another devastating blow.

Consequently, the stress of the situation caused my grandma to have her first stroke. After helping pay for her brother's funeral, before we could even process our grief, my grand aunt Tati Carole Passed away due to kidney failure. While efforts were made to keep news of her sister's passing from her, my grandma found out through a family friend and unsurprisingly had a second stroke. The second stroke took with it some of her ability to speak and restricted movement on the right side of her body (she's still currently going through speech therapy and getting better). In addition to other minor things, these main events attributed to my current poor finances for college.

My Uncle, before his passing, worked for a taxi company in Port St. Lucie. His work for the taxi company gave him the freedom to support his family while still being available enough to make it to events like birthdays and graduations. My Uncle was at one point thinking of moving to Uber. Still, he didn't appreciate Uber's lack of regard for the safety of their drivers as well as the lack of benefits like dental and insurance taxi companies provided.

As for my Haitian Descent, I am a first-generation American in my family; while my sister was born and raised in Haiti, I was born and raised in the US. After I was a little bit older, I lived in Haiti for a total of 2 years on my grandparent's property but moved back to the States at my father's request. My time there was also right before Haiti became less safe, so I left at a good time.

For housing and companies, I have been interested in an internship with Arthrex as a software engineer to help design systems for their products. Not only is Arthrex local, but I also love their approach to hiring interns based on personality attributes rather than just skills. I also choose to live on campus for its affordability and proximity to campus. As a sophomore on campus without a car, shuttles to campus are my primary modes of transportation. I will likely only take housing off campus once the transportation circumstances change (if they change).

As I have mentioned above, my current finance could be better. There needs to be more than bright futures and some grants to cover housing and textbooks fully. This scholarship money would help significantly in covering the cost of housing during the semester and summer. It would also give my mother peace of mind knowing I won't

have to take loans to cover my remaining balance. Having the remainder of things paid for would take a massive load off our shoulders and make my pursuit of this major feasible economically. My financial circumstances warrant more presidency over the other candidates, and I have the passion and drive to back it up. I have a realistic vision of what I want from pursuing higher education and a clear picture of what I need to get there. Even If I'm not selected to receive this scholarship, I appreciate you taking the time to read this and consider my application.