

Brittanique Honeyghan
May 20 2022

Dear Selection Committee,

My name is Brittanique Honeyghan and I am an undergraduate student at the University of Toronto completing my bachelors degree in Political Science, Sociology and minor in Philosophy. I am applying for the Carmen Anderson Perseverance Award because I have experienced a significant set of intersectional challenges, both systemic and personal all throughout my educational career yet I have transformed my obstacles into opportunities and remain dedicated to my goals.

As a young Black woman and the first person in my family to attend a post secondary institution, I have been met with frequent opposition, affecting my personal development and academic goals. I am aware that many black women and youth remain unprotected within their own communities, creating double marginalization and oppression that increases barriers to success. Growing up in a dysfunctional and unstable household, I have been exposed to complex trauma and neglect as a result of numerous instances of physical altercations and separation that endangered my safety and well being.

Since the age of 16, I had spent time in homeless shelters and staying with strangers in compromised environments over disagreements with my parents. At present, I continue to experience family issues that have led to depression, anxiety, insomnia, homelessness, and feelings of isolation. However, In the year 2020, these issues compounded when I was abruptly removed from my parent's house for the 5th time without financial preparation or accommodations all while in the midst of a global pandemic. This public separation took a toll on my mental and emotional well-being and posed a significant threat to my aspirations in becoming a lawyer. I was placed in a precarious situation with little support and resources, without knowing if I would survive, let alone complete my education. If it were not for my

level of awareness and maturity, I could have been taken advantage of, trafficked or succumbed to the external pressures.

Thankfully, I was able to transition as an independent student and found a safe space of my own in a short period of time. While living alone, I was sleeping for an average of 3 hours each night, waking up drenched in sweat and experiencing hypnagogic jerks. I knew that I had to be proactive and reach out to my family doctor for help before it was too late. My doctor connected me with a cognitive behavioral therapist who I met with every week to get a handle on my crippling insomnia so I could focus on my academics.

During this time, I invested in self-help, reading books and listening to encouraging podcasts which helped to alleviate some of the stress I was experiencing and provided clarity in moving forward. Life has knocked me down more times than I could count, but everyday I get up with the courage to persevere. Ultimately, I believe that having the right mindset is instrumental to achieving success and overcoming challenges. Although I had been victimized, I had to make the decision to prioritize my education above everything else as I knew that once I remained dedicated and focussed, I would eventually improve my overall quality of life. Instead of choosing self-destructive habits to cope with the pain and confusion, I began journaling and writing songs as a means of self-expression while encouraging and inspiring others. It took immense strength and a willingness to remain disciplined, motivated, and driven to achieve my academic and personal goals despite not having some of my basic needs being met on a consistent basis.

As an independent student, I maintained straight A's in my courses and pursued a work/study program to further assist myself. I later became the recipient of the David Rayside Undergraduate Scholarship at the University of Toronto for my involvement in promoting greater public understanding of social and cultural diversity and enhanced inclusion of those who are historically marginalized. Not to mention, early this year I had the

opportunity of sharing my testimony and research as the guest speaker for the Meadowvale AXIS evangelistic series where I had the chance to encourage other young people to develop a growth mindset, and utilize faith over fear as a way to develop fortitude in difficult times.

At this time, I am currently facing yet another obstacle stemming from a family breakdown. I recognize the unjustified actions and all the distractions inhibiting my success. However, I am confident that with the right support and resources, I will continue to make strides in my academic and personal goals. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Brittanique'.

Brittanique Honeyghan

