



## *The Fares Arts & Sciences Term Scholarship for International Students*



### **Onyinyechi Ukaire, A18**

**HOMETOWN:** Abuja, Nigeria

**MAJOR:** Biochemistry with a minor  
in Computer Science

**ACTIVITIES:** Research Intern,  
National Institutes of Health; Tufts  
Premedical Society; Study Abroad  
Program in Oxford; Atlantis Clinical  
Shadowing Fellowship in Portugal;  
Tufts African Dance Collective

When Onyinyechi Ukaire, “Ukay,” shares his life story, he says it began at the African Leadership Academy (ALA) in South Africa. The school, which brings together students with leadership potential from countries around the African continent, taught Ukay how to think in terms of problem solving and entrepreneurship. These concepts were foreign in Ukay’s home country of Nigeria. “I realized how engrossed I’d been in a system where people thought problems could not be fixed or changed,” he said. The realization energized him. “It made me patriotic about being Nigerian and made me want to find ways to help my country.”

Ukay entered Tufts with plans to become a doctor. He joined the Premedical Society, did an internship with the National Institutes of Health, and participated in a fellowship with Atlantis Clinical Shadowing program. “I came here with a strong passion for medicine because I thought that was the one choice I had.” But like the ALA, the liberal arts environment at Tufts and discussions with fellow students and professors inspired Ukay to expand his thinking. Though he did not know what else he might do at first, he knew he wanted to be more creative in defining his future path.

Sharing his change of heart with his parents was another story, and he postponed the discussion until the end of junior year, by which time he had completed all the requirements for his biochemistry major. “It was difficult to tell my parents something they didn’t want to hear, but I thought, I think I’ve made them happy enough, now I will spend my last year at Tufts trying something new.”

This past year, Ukay has nurtured his creative streak by immersing himself in computer science. “I realized I love actually building things. Now I’m motivated to answer the question, ‘How can I build things that can solve health-care problems?’” After three solid years with not a single day off, he looks forward to taking time after graduation to reflect on all he has learned and explore opportunities in health-care entrepreneurship.

Financial aid has made it possible for Ukay to get the most out of his Tufts experience without worrying that financial issues would cut his time short. “It was reassuring to know that if I did well, I could complete all four years at Tufts. I would not have had such confidence if it weren’t for the Fares A&S Term Scholarship.”