



Benjamin Mason, Philander Smith College- c/o 2019, Business Marketing



Name : Benjamin Mason

Your HBCU : Philander Smith College

Graduation Year : 2019

Major : Business Marketing

1. Where are you from? Who introduced you to HBCUs?*

I am from Dallas, Texas. I was introduced to HBCU's by both of my parents who each attended an HBCU



Image Credit: Benjamin Mason

2. Why did you choose an HBCU over a pwi?*

The biggest reason i chose an HBCU over a PWI, was to keep myself in a relatable environment. Also to connect with other like-minded black students across the country, who made it out from their hometown with goals just like mine to do something huge for their future.

3. What is the story of your "experience" at Your HBCU given its heralded status as a stellar and prestigious institution?*

I came to Philander Smith college in the Summer of 2015 through a Summer Bridge program called START (Summer Tuition And Readiness Track/Pathways). I heard about the school through my high school Prime Prep Academy when they made a recruitment trip and offered me scholarship money and an opportunity for both education and to run track. It was the very first year for this program and I connected with a small group of students from various states. Some I've never been too before. My first semester there i was sort of rough around the edges and I struggled trying to adjust to this new environment. Therefore I dove right in and became involved with different organizations that could teach me life and career skills, as well as help me network with leaders in different organizations and career fields. My freshman year i became the second ever Mr. UNCF for my school and join Pre-Alumni Council. I also joined into Stump modeling Troupe, an on campus modeling organization. Another organization i joined was Religious Life, a huge group on campus, being that the college is Methodist based. All while doing this i maintained a 3.8 GPA and made the Presidents list. Opportunities really started growing for me the following semester of my 1st year there when i became a spring 16 member of the Beta Tau chapter of Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity inc. i started meeting different people within the fraternity who offered me guidance and chances to gain experience. Throughout my second year at Philander i continued to network and meet amazing people through different conferences, programs, and organizations. I linked with students from different HBCU's at a summer program called SIEMML (Summer Institution of Emerging Manager and Leaders) in California. Learned a lot about entrepreneurship

at the Allen Entrepreneurial Institute. I also became the national pre-alumni council Vice President at my second National Pre-alumni Council conference. My sophomore year is also when i began to mentor freshman students who were struggling to adjust socially, and excel academically through an amazing program called ASAP (Academic Success and Achievement Program). This is where i changed a lot of students lives and helped guide them on how to reach their goals and be focused in college. I helped show them the importance of a lesson i had to learn, to make decisions based on where you want to go in life not just on where you come from. Currently i am finishing up my third year in college, where i am president of my fraternity's chapter, Stump modeling, Greek Council, Vice President of NPAC, a member of SGA, and captain of the Track team. All while still maintaining a 3.6 GPA. Being at Philander Smith college has truly helped me transform into a goal-oriented, determined, and educated leader, through the different internships, programs, and opportunities I've accomplished during my time. I am looking forward to many more.

4. "First time" experiences at your HBCU?*

I went to California and was in LA for the first time ever while at Philander as well as being in Orlando, Florida. I participated in a Pageant for the first time ever here, as well as coordinated one.

5. Who are the professors that have impacted your life in and out of the classroom? How did they do that?*

Kevin Cooper, who is the Director of Alumni relations there at Philander as well as my frat brother and advisor for my chapter and Pre Alumni Council has made a huge impact on my life, a mentor to me he has helped me gain various opportunities helped me stay focus, and make choices for the best of my future. He's been there for me when ever i was in need financially, and helped me network with leaders from different fields. Another huge impact on me was Reverend Ronnie Miller Yow. From the first day i got there he became connected with me and helped keep me guided spiritually and socially. He is a person i could speak to when i was going through personal problems, and needed guidance. Professor Bruce James, also my frat brother has made a huge impact on me. In and out of the classroom about my future career and major. Lastly Coach Chris Mcconnell, my track coach has helped me stay determined for what i want to do and where i want to go in life. Since meeting him I've learned a lot about exercising a huge hobby of mine, and being morally sound.



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