



## **Brittnie-lee Duffus, Tougaloo College- c/o 2021, Biology**



**Name :** Brittnie-lee Duffus

**Your HBCU :** Tougaloo College

**Graduation Year :** 2021

**Major :** Biology

**Minor :** Chemistry

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

I am from the beautiful, exotic island of Jamaica, in the Caribbean. I was introduced to Tougaloo College through two of my mentors, Mrs. Ivey and Mrs. J. Harris.



In July 2018, I represented my HBCU with pride on an international level. Through Tougaloo College, I have interacted with a diverse group of individuals, who have each uniquely fueled my growth as a person.

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

Prior to my enrollment at Tougaloo College, I had no foreknowledge of the terms HBCU and PWI. It was through various cultural awareness programs and social interactions that I learned of the honour and dignity that HBCUs possessed. I then realized the opportunity I was bestowed with, and because of that I am forever thankful to God for allowing me to make this choice.

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

Being at Tougaloo College has been an experience of elation, confusion, self-growth, appreciation, and the list goes on. Initially, the challenge of acclimatizing to a culturally different environment was overwhelming, and hit me harder than I expected it to. I was very reserved and kept to my own small circle, out of fear of being questioned or judged for being the odd one out. On the contrary, this was actually welcomed! Students, faculty and staff were genuinely interested in who I was, and my culture. Through various individuals, my experience thus far has been one like never before, in all sense of the phrase. I can proudly say that I am more comfortable to be myself and interact with those around me, because of the reception I have gotten from my peers and those God has placed in my life.

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

The most memorable "first time" experience I have had would definitely be the exposure I got to Greek Life! It has been a mixture of bewilderment and excitement observing the life of those who pledged and the various characteristics they brought to the school, each in their own uniqueness.

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

I would like to highlight Dr. Scharri Walker, Professor of Biology. During my first semester at the Eagle Queen, she taught me that it is okay to not always meet the standards you set for yourself, and those of others. It is also okay to strive for excellence and not feel guilty about it. What is not okay, is sitting in the same position and refusing to elevate yourself through a renewed mindset, determination and persistence. I must say that the bulk of individuals who have impacted my college experience, who have fueled my growth as an individual, are other employees of Tougaloo College and the larger community. I am forever grateful to them for providing emotional support, among others, throughout my most vulnerable moments.



Every accomplishment, every effort, is recognized even in the most minute ways.