



## **Chelsea Taylor, Delaware State University- c/o 2017, Criminal Justice**



**Name :** Chelsea Taylor

**Your HBCU :** Delaware State University

**Graduation Year :** 2017

**Major :** Criminal Justice

**Minor :** N/A

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

I am from Prince George's County, MD and I was introduced to HBCUs from my father.



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

I chose to go to my HBCU because of the overwhelming feeling of belonging that hit me the very first time I stepped on campus was too great to ignore and too authentic to be duplicated elsewhere. DSU had this organic energy about it that drew me in, enhanced me, and made me better. Was it always easy? No, but nothing that's worth having comes easy. After visiting my HBCU, I knew I belonged there and searching for another school would've been futile. All in all, my HBCU felt like home and I just don't think I would've gotten the same feeling at any other institution.

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

It's hard to condense 4 years of ups, downs, struggles, and triumphs into a few short sentences, but what it ultimately boils down to is, I wouldn't trade my time at DSU for anything in the world. After high school, college just seemed like the next logical step for me, even though I had always struggled to stay focused and make good grades, but somehow DSU changed all of that. Before coming to campus, I decided that my major would be criminal justice, but I didn't know what to expect from my classes or how I would perform in them. I just figured school would be as it always had been: boring, hard, annoying, and disappointing. However, the atmosphere at DSU was one that made me feel driven to not only pass my classes, but achieve more than I had ever imagined was possible for myself. Instead of success being what everyone else wanted for me, it became what I wanted for myself and that realization changed my life for the better. I excelled in every class, joined clubs and organizations on campus, and became the person I would've wanted to look up to when I was younger. After 4 years, I graduated Summa Cum Laude from Delaware State University, served as the President of the DSU Choir, Captain of the Sweet 16 Flag Team of the Approaching Storm Marching Band, traveled to China twice to sing and study music, and overcame the self-imposed ideas that I would never succeed as a scholar or be an effective leader.

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

For the first time, while attending DSU, I decided to become a member of the flag team in the marching band. I had always done band throughout middle school and high school, but played the saxophone in concert settings, never in a marching setting. So, joining the flag team with no prior flag or dance experience, was completely out of my comfort zone. Looking back, I don't know how I mustered the courage to go out there and try out, but I am forever grateful that I did. After being in the band for 3 years I became a leader, developed skills I never knew existed, and expanded my family ties to include all the band staff, band members, dancers, and flag girls that I had met along the way.

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

Some professors that had a profound impact on my life both at DSU and beyond were Dr. Laurin Parker, Dr. Lloyd Mallory, and Mr. Devin Mercer. All of these professors, whether they know it or not, helped me to develop my confidence in myself and my abilities, as well as expand my horizons, never settling for what's easy. Whether through conversations I had with them or just seeing the way they carried themselves, I was inspired to be unapologetically myself, boldly honest, and unafraid of my own greatness.

