



Chinnaya Ukpabi, Meharry Medical College- c/o 2021, Dentistry



Name : Chinnaya Ukpabi

Your HBCU : Meharry Medical College

Graduation Year : 2021

Major : Dentistry

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

I am from Riverdale, GA. I was introduced to HBCUs back in high school when I played in the marching band. My classmates and I all loved the idea of playing in the marching band at an HBCU; it was something we all worked really hard for. Even though I did not end up playing in one, this really opened my eyes to the greatness of HBCUs. Also, my oldest brother attended an HBCU. Even though I knew a bit about them before he went to college, I was able to view his HBCU experience as something very admirable.



Picture taken by @tailoredlens on instagram

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

I actually attended a PWI for my undergraduate education. I truly enjoyed my time there but I wanted a different experience for my dental school education. Over the years, I learned that the atmosphere of HBCUs were just totally different than that of PWIs. It was something that I felt I needed to experience. Aside from that, my HBCU has a very particular mission: "to improve the health and health care of minority and underserved communities by offering excellent education and training programs in the health sciences" (<https://home.mmc.edu/about/mission-vision/>). Their mission resonated with me so much that I just knew this was where I wanted to be.

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

I absolutely love it here! This is only my second semester but it has been a life changing experience thus far. I love the fact that every student here is on the same mission. I'm inspired by my classmates and other schoolmates every single day. I have built great relationships here and learned such great things already and I am looking forward to what the rest of my time at Meharry will bring.

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

One of my favorite "first time" experiences at Meharry was the first time I stepped foot on campus for my interview. Meharry felt different than any other school I've ever been to. From the time I spent chatting with the other interviewees in the waiting area to the time that we were packing up

our things to head back home, I just felt very comfortable. I felt a strong sense of belonging.

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

One professor that has impacted me the most so far is Dr. James E. Tyus, D.D.S. He taught my dental anatomy and occlusion class last semester, the first dental school class that we take here. Not only did he teach us the basics of dentistry, he also taught us little things that would carry us through our careers as dentists.



Chinnaya Ukpabi (All smiles!)