



Michael Finkley, Allen University- c/o 2011, English Literature



Name : Michael Finkley

Your HBCU : Allen University

Graduation Year : 2011

Major : English Literature

Minor : African American Studies

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

I was born and raised in Mullins, South Carolina. My mother always told my sisters and I she wanted us to have a career instead of a job. I did not know what that meant until later in life. When I reached senior year in high school and "college talk" was all the rave! I knew I wanted to attend, but did not know how to get started; this was when I found out I was a first generation student. My high school started college tours and I was chosen to attend. When I landed on the campus of Allen University, I felt something special. I loved the home-like, family-like atmosphere and what they had to offer. I applied on the spot and within a few weeks, I was accepted. I LOVED my HBCU experience; I would relive it and NOT change a thing!



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

When I toured the campuses of HBCUs, I saw the family atmosphere, the small classroom sizes, and working professionals who looked like me. I did not see much of that at PWIs. I wanted to be known by my name and not by my student identification number.

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

When I arrived on the campus of Allen University, I hated it! I hated it because it was new for me. I wanted to go back home, work, and then go to a local college near my hometown. I told my mom this and she was on her way to pick me up. After she talked with my step-dad, she did not come. This was one of the best decisions she could have made for me, besides giving birth to me. I excelled! I started recruiting for my institution freshmen year, I joined organizations, I was initiated into a fraternity, and the list continues. I always tell students that college is what you make it. You are the master of your fate and the captain of your soul!

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

I had a lot of first time experiences. My eyes were open to a world I had never seen before. I gained the confidence to speak and present in front of others, network with prestigious individuals, and meet some of the best people in my life that I still call my friends until this day!

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

Picture it! Sophomore year; I was introduced to Dr. Ronnie Hopkins. He was my oral speech professor. Everyone told me I was the younger version of him through our mannerisms. I modeled myself after him because I wanted to be just like him. I still find myself doing this present day. There was also Dr. Pamela Wilson-Martin. She was my academic advisor until she became the first female president of Allen University during my senior year. She was very hard on me, but I definitely appreciate it today! I learned from her that you have to work hard for everything in life and prove to yourself that you can achieve anything if you REALLY put your mind to it.

