



Omar Talib, Cheyney University- c/o 2011, Chemistry



Name : Omar Talib

Your HBCU : Cheyney University

Graduation Year : 2011

Major : Chemistry

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

I was born and raised in Philadelphia. I attended Abraham Lincoln High School and heard about HBCUs from a recruiter. [How did you first hear about HBCUs?] A recruiter came to my high school. I attended the presentation, the rest is history. [What about the presentation persuaded you? The tuition or the atmosphere of family found at an HBCU?] Actually, the tuition I found out at a later time and that kind of sealed the deal. The atmosphere and the history. Cheyney isn't a large university with tens of thousands enrolled but I think that was a good thing. If you didn't know someone you knew someone that did and that's worth a lot in terms of comm(unity).



Graduation | Image Credit Omar Talib

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

Hearing the history of most HBCUs makes the choice seem so natural and easy. After hearing about the legacy of Cheyney University I checked the tuition. It was a great match for me. I chose Cheyney because I was interested in a HBCU. And Cheyney gave me, a C- student, an opportunity with affordable tuition.

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

It is entirely too easy for the media to control the image of what it is to be black. The HBCU experience, to me, is seeing that so many of us transcend each and every stereotype. There were so many bright personalities that graced the campus. You can't help but to grow in love for yourself and your people.

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

None that I can remember that doesn't invalidate any of my moments.

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

The professors in the Department of Natural and Applied Sciences. I majored in Chemistry and my professors made learning easy and fun, by being helpful and sincerely involved in my education

and success. Had I not earned a degree, the blame would be entirely on my shoulders.

6. What sports and/or extra curricular activities did you do in High School? And why?

I was academically unstable in High School. I couldn't play sports or participate in much during that time.

7. Best restaurants on/near campus? Best dishes?

Hot wings and pizza are the only food groups a successful college student needs! Brother's and Pizza U were the two hot spots near campus. Hahaha, that depends on what you're craving. The snack bar has it all, cheese steaks, chicken fingers, hoagies (that's a sub or torpedo for non-Philadelphians), cookies and candy and salads too for healthy people and it's all pretty tasty. I ate there then worked there and then ate there some more. However, if you want some hot wings or pizza, Brother's or Pizza U is the way to go.

8. College crush?

I will plead the fifth.

9. Ghost stories involving buildings or spots on campus?

There was this abandoned building behind Tubman Dorm. We didn't make it all the through. I was rolling with chumps.

10. What is your major? and Why did you choose it?

Chemistry was my major. I love science and I love a challenge.

11. What to date has been your proudest moment @ Your HBCU?

Graduating was my proudest moment. There were ups and downs but receiving my degree meant I succeeded.

12. Where are the spots to go to if you wanted to cuddle with your boy or girlfriend?

I am Muslim so I cuddled with my Quran.

13. What are the chants heard most often at the sporting events?

CCCCCCCCCCCCC UUUUUUUUUUUUUU!!!!!!

14. How are you positively active on campus? (e.g. clubs, SGA, etc.)

The Muslim Student Association, United Nations and the Biology Club were the groups that I exhibited the most activity in. Tons of fun events and informational programs happened.

15. Where is the “yard” located?

Sometimes the yard meant the entire campus. Sometimes it meant where the frat plots were and other times the quad. Depending on who you were talking to you knew where to go.

16. What and where are the historical places on campus?

The entire campus.

17. What to date has been your saddest moment at your HBCU?

I won't expose myself too much except to say that some loved ones passed and others became extremely ill.

18. What situation in your life made you feel like you had arrived into woman/manhood?

I won't feel like that until I become a father. I am always learning and sometimes I am able to teach people what I've learned. However, manhood, for me, is providing for a family of my own.

19. How do you deal with racism when you encounter it?

I deal with racism by being patient. I am not saying turn the other cheek, I am more in agreement with Malcolm X than Dr. King. I am saying don't be quick to get angry. Ignorance is a disease and anger isn't the cure.

20. When and how did you discover your passion in life?

I fell in love with Chemistry during an internship. Internships are important.

21. What's your take on life (in the philosophical sense)?

No god has the right to be worshiped but Allah. Work hard and try your best in everything and regardless of the outcome have patience and don't give up.

22. How did you overcome your nervousness about going to college?

I wasn't nervous. I am nervous about graduate school but I am just going to jump in God willing.

23. Are you a member of a fraternity?

I didn't pledge. I considered it, as there are benefits. However, after deep thought I saw it as a need to belong or fit in or have an identity. I opted to belong to, fit in and be myself. My statement is more metaphoric than it is literal.

24. How did your HBCU prepare you for a diverse workplace?

I don't know whether you'll believe this or not. Cheyney University showed me that we are more than complexions. Experiencing all those unique characters helped me become less judgmental, not just to people in my own race but all races.

25. What advice would you give high school students filling out college applications for the first time?

College is a serious decision. Not one to be taken lightly. It may be hard to come to terms with growing up but you have to, so you owe it to yourself to put your best foot forward.

26. If you could only speak two sentences to the youth coming after you what would you say?

Take advantage of the opportunities in front of you before the door closes. Stay positive, because if one door closed and another opened you don't want to miss that too.

27. How did your HBCU help you to transition into your careers workforce?

There were lots of internship opportunities with the Department of Natural and Applied Sciences. Some students neglected them, fortunately I wasn't among them. Those internships get you the experience and skills you need to impress any employer.