



Shannon Crowner, Bowie State University- c/o 2013, History



Name : Shannon Crowner

Your HBCU : Bowie State University

Graduation Year : 2013

Major : History

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

I am from a little town south of Annapolis called, Shady Side, MD. I don't remember an exact moment that I became interested in HBCUs. I remember my mom talking about Howard growing up, but I am a first-generation college student which made college conversations different in our household. I don't want to be that cliché person that mentions "A Different World," but that is my earliest memory of what college looked like. How powerful of a message is that? It wasn't until I started to do college tours in high school that I found myself gravitating towards HBCUs. I'm blessed to be from the DMV area which has some of the best options that HBCUs have to offer.



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

My top schools included both HBCUs and PWIs. When I got accepted into all of them, it came down to what I could afford and where I would be happy. THE SAME GRADES, TEST SCORES, AND RESUME THAT GOT ME PARTIAL SCHOLARSHIPS TO PWIs GOT ME A FULL RIDE TO HBCUs. HBCUs WANT our talents and skills. If had to choose, my top reasons would most likely be: -Reviews from others who have attended the institution or any HBCU -Cultural Experiences (being around black people honestly) -The atmosphere during the college tour -Affordability - Classroom Size -Resources available on campus (I was a history major. I needed the library and computer lab to meet my needs) -IS HOUSING AVAILABLE ON CAMPUS?

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

Humbling, firstly. I was always the smart black child growing up. I was well rounded, loved school, was in Girl Scouts, knew how to swim, etc. SOOO when you step into a classroom where EVERYONE is the smart black man/woman with a long resume of accolades by the age of 18, it's very eye-opening. I was a history major, one of only eight to finish the program. It was intense, but college is supposed to be a challenge. A history major at an HBCU is an experience in itself. Our curriculum is designed around us and for us. I constantly found myself crying or carrying emotional trauma while learning AA History I was never introduced to in my earlier studies. My professors were passionate about the field and made sure we were equipped for careers or graduate school. My professor recommended me for an internship at the Bowie State library handling historical documents in the archives. Bowie State is the FIRST HBCU in the state of

Maryland, so we are rich in history and house a lot of important artifacts. This led to my love of historical objects and collections. Fast forward five years later, I'm a museum educator at the National Museum of African American History and Culture.

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

HAHA, is this where we talk about dealing with admissions, residence life, and financial aid? Because those are "first-time" experiences that you have to go through to grow through! I remember the first time I looked around a classroom and everyone looked like me. Like most African-Americans, I've been a minority all my life. Moving into my dorm, freshmen orientation, walking around campus-just a sea of Black faces like I had never seen. It was amazing.

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

Dr. Karen Cook-Bell! I saw the way my other Black male professors frowned their noses up at her expertise and made comments about her hyphenated last name. I had never felt more inspired and that wasn't even about her instructional style! She challenged me to be a true historian, to research, write, and present. She edited a portion of my undergraduate thesis to be published in a journal. I didn't know how well she was setting up my future. I wish I could go back and hug her every day.

