

Growing up in south-east London, I became accustomed to learning alongside classmates from various ethnoracial identities and nationalities. Differences in backgrounds led to differences in ideas, which pushed me to reflect on what I believed, how I behaved, and why. Believing exposure to new ways of thinking strengthened learning, I worked tirelessly to become the first in my family to attend a US college and experience the liberal arts.

As a Black British woman entering an elite predominantly white university, I braced myself for US-UK culture shock, but hadn't considered culture shock from moving to a less ethnoracially diverse educational environment. I arrived excited to participate in an exchange of ideas, but began to wonder if my peers with dominant identities had less incentive to counteract homophily or investigate their beliefs. This experience of feeling as though assumptions were being overlooked, answers unchallenged, and fascinating questions unanswered, motivated me to pursue a career involving the critical consumption and production of knowledge. Holding marginalized identities also informed my research interests. While interning at *The Bail Project* and *Surveillance Technology Oversight Project*, I noted racial-spatial disparities in surveillance technology deployment. I want to study the sociopolitical implications of local governments' technology adoption to highlight communities that often lack adequate representation in the design and implementation of emerging technologies.

Despite faculty encouragement, I spent the last year of college wrestling with doubts about whether graduate school was for me. I felt restricted by finances, as well as representation, having only ever interacted with two Black professors and not having relatives with PhDs. My confidence increased when I was accepted into several PhD application mentorship schemes that augmented my resources. To pay this forward, I have mentored underrepresented students applying to PhDs, providing SOP feedback and advice on graduate schools through MIT's *Political Science Application Mentorship Program*. Since 2018, I have also volunteered as a mentor for the same social mobility college prep program that I participated in during high school. As an aspiring professor, I want to mentor students from diverse backgrounds so that they feel like they belong in educational spaces and are comfortable expressing, considering, and critiquing different ideas.

The same passion for tackling questions about inequality that drew me to research has motivated my advocacy efforts at MIT. Concerned with departmental policies' impact on lower retention rates among women and POCs, I served as a Diversity Co-Chair on our Graduate Student Council. In this role, I collected qualitative data on student experiences, researched DEI initiatives in peer departments, and held one-on-one meetings with 8 faculty and several staff. Undeterred by barriers to advancing macro-level changes, I worked with my *Graduate Student Works-in-Progress Workshop* Co-Chair to pursue micro-level improvements. By championing inclusive discussion norms, we hoped to encourage respectful, constructive feedback and build community in our workshop. As a Stanford PhD student, I would continue mentoring younger students, practicing collegiality, and supporting climate-enhancing departmental policies and diversity initiatives. From personal experience, these efforts can bolster research productivity and build diverse, collaborative networks.