

Academic Year 2006-2007

Hello President's Council of Cornell Women.

My name is Keri Truitt, I am originally from Queens, NY and I attended Hempstead High School on Long Island where I graduated 3rd in my class with high honors. I am currently a senior here at Cornell University in the College of Arts & Sciences.

I chose to attend Cornell not only for its wonderful reputation as one of the most prestigious universities in the country but because of the beautiful scenery that Ithaca boasts; unfortunately, the \$40,000+ tuition and other expenses don't exactly make Cornell a real possibility for students like me. I would therefore like to express my deepest gratitude to your council for the \$4,000 that you have awarded me through the Cornell Tradition fellowship.

I am currently completing my requirements for a major in English, and I hope to pursue a career in print Journalism upon graduation from Cornell. I am enrolled in a web design course at the moment which is surprisingly interesting and I am working on finishing a minor in Africana Studies as well. My last semester here will hopefully be smooth sailing.

During the academic year, I work as an administrative assistant for the Ujamaa work study program. I spend most of my free time working as Editor-in-Chief on Black Perspectives Newspaper, Cornell's only campus publication dedicated to the voice of the people of the African Diaspora.

This past summer, I interned with the NYC Human Resources Administration in the Office of Public Information and Communication. I gained a lot from the internship, including some great networking connections, a couple of published writing samples as well as detailed research experience in the history of the agency.

I hope to use writing samples accumulated over the summer and throughout this academic year to apply for magazine internship this coming winter. Then, my next step will be to apply for post-graduation employment opportunities. I'm really looking forward to it!

Again, I just wanted to communicate my sincere appreciation for this Cornell Tradition award and to somehow convey to your council that I will take advantage of the chance that I have been given to spend another wonderful year here at Cornell.

Sincerely,

Keri Truitt '07
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Academic Year 2006-2007

To the President's Council of Cornell Women,

Once again, your generous organization has provided me with a named scholarship for the academic year. I cannot express how grateful I am that you would select me for this honor once more. The monies that you provide do a great deal in funding my education, and help me to get through all the expenses of the year with minimal debt. Thank you from the bottom of my heart.

As I gave you background information about myself last year, I thought that I would just give you an update on my academic life and how your monetary contribution has been so helpful. This summer, I was selected, out of over one hundred applicants, to attend the Research Experience for Undergraduates program in beautiful Juneau, Alaska, at the University of Alaska Southeast. Before going, I had no idea just how much of an impact this program would make on my life. My research mentor was Dr. Sanjay Pyare, and he has been studying the landscape ecology of the declining Boreal toad (*Bufo boreas*) as a part of a large-scale amphibian monitoring effort. As you may know, amphibian populations around the world are declining severely, and more and more extinctions are occurring. As indicator species, they are telling us that there is something wrong with the current state of our planet, and if we don't do something, amphibians will not last into the future. This summer, I assisted in collecting data on important information for the conservation of the Boreal toad, and then did some independent research of my own.

I traveled all over Southeast Alaska, from the National Wilderness of Admiralty Island, to the logging-marred landscape of Prince of Wales Island, to the river-dominated wetlands of the small town of Haines. In every area that my toad research partner and I ventured, we used maps and GPS (global positioning systems) to find randomly selected possible toad breeding sites, and then looked for the presence of toads and/or toad breeding and took microhabitat data. We did this to determine if the Boreal toad is declining in Southeast Alaska, as it is in the lower-48, and also what characterizes its breeding habitat, as it is found in a diverse range of sites. We hiked many miles a day, stayed in cabins without running water or electricity for weeks, climbed 4,000 foot mountains in XtraTuffs (Juneau sneakers, or rubber boots), ran into bears and learned how to use bear spray (never too close, luckily), and canoed down (and sometimes up!)

rivers, all in search of these cryptic toads. At the end of the summer, I also did an independent research project based on the microhabitat data that we had collected, and presented my work in front of a critical scientific audience. I gained an invaluable amount of field research experience this summer, and I now know, without a doubt, that I want to be doing this for the rest of my life. I also made many lasting friendships, and important professional contacts for possible research positions next year. This summer I got to walk on a glacier, fly in float planes, travel for days on inter-island ferries, hike up mountains to rustic cabins, drive a boat, catch halibut and Dungeness crab, and wade through chest-high water... all while learning about my future career. This was an experience that I will always remember, and one that I know has profoundly impacted my life.

The scholarship that you gave me last year, along with the one you have just given me, have facilitated my ability to participate in this amazing program, and keep me active in both academics and my community throughout the year. Once again, I want to express my deepest thanks for bestowing me with this honor. You will not be disappointed; your award has and will open many doors for me, just as I am sure it has opened many for the countless other young women whose lives you have touched. I owe so much to you for that.

Sincerely and best wishes,

Michel Ohmer

Academic Year 2006-2007

Dear President's Council of Cornell Women,

Often times, we get so caught up in the day to day activities that we forget to pause and look at how blessed we truly are. It is easy to complain about everything around us, but I am truly grateful for organizations such as yours, which seek to promote academic fervor and community involvement through scholarship awards. The money that I have been awarded is wonderful, but knowing that there are people out there who see my potential and are willing to invest in me, is the greatest honor of this award. As I begin to conclude my junior year, and I look into what my future holds, I hope to be a part of this group of dynamic women who seek to foster and encourage leadership at the undergraduate level. It is your commitment to seeing me succeed that reassures me that I can. Meeting some of you at the Tradition reception was also a great experience. Speaking with women who had changed career paths, switched lifestyles and have all succeeded tremendously, allows me to be at ease with my current state of indecision concerning career paths. No matter where I end up, I know that there are people out there who will support me in my endeavor toward success. I would like to say a heartfelt, thank you! Thank you for your donations and I hope that you will continue to sow a seed into women, like myself, who need to know that there are women out there who believe in their potential.

Thank You,

Amma Aboagye
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