

Speech Editing for Ashante Robinson

Good evening. It's a pleasure to be here tonight. Last time I was here, I stood before you as a recipient of the Gayle Miller Leaders of Change scholarship, excited to begin college at UC Irvine, where I am now a full-time student.

My college experience so far has been a bit of a rollercoaster—at times I feel like it's going well, and at other times, I feel its challenges and stress. Despite the times of challenge, though, I have truly learned to embrace every minute of this experience so far, and I cannot wait to see what is in store.

Political Science has become my newfound passion. I have been so enthralled with every single class that I've taken that I've decided to make my major Political Science with a minor in Computer Science.

My scholarship is part of the reason that I can give my full attention to my studies. I have a small on-campus job, but beyond that, I have no real need for additional income—or large expenses—to deal with. I can bring my full focus to school, and for that I am thankful.

Being at college has brought me closer to my family; my mom and I talk every day, and I share more with her than I used to, about how I'm feeling and what I'm going through. My family has always been supportive and believed in me, and I'm so grateful for them.

To those struggling with the idea of going to college because of where they come from, their financial situations, or because they simply don't think they can't do it, I want to say this: you will never truly know that for yourself unless you try. Giving up before you even get started will get you nowhere. Know that there are so many systems in place to assist college students

who are first-generation, of low-income, and students of color. Ask—and keep asking—until you find the resources and support you need to move toward your full potential.

In four years, I plan to graduate from college, take a couple of months off, and then dive right back into school for my master's degree in education. My long-term goal when I began college was to instill confidence in young girls and empower them to pursue careers in male-dominated fields. I will add my passion, knowledge, and the power of Political Science to a growing set of tools I can use to make changes in the world and help others.

Thank you, again, to those who donated to and continue to support the Gayle Miller Leaders of Change scholarship.