



The Broad Prize Scholar Speaker Briana Martin Remarks

Thank you, Mr. McGinity.

First, I would like to thank The Eli and Edythe Broad Foundation and everyone here for allowing me to speak to you today. The Broad Prize has made a great impact on my educational journey. This scholarship helped make college a reality for me and was instrumental in helping me relieve the financial burden of attending the University of Vermont.

There have always been times in my life when it seemed as if hardships had no end. Growing up in a number of different homes and being raised by a number of different family members was not easy. Yet I've managed to use my struggles to fuel my passion to succeed. Despite the obstacles with my family and my financial circumstances, I have remained optimistic.

When my family told me college didn't seem possible because of the expense, I worked even harder in high school. I formed a relationship with my guidance counselor so she could help me explore my options. I made significant improvements in my academics, going from a 2.5 GPA to a 3.3, and I challenged myself to take on leadership roles. My guidance counselor encouraged me to seek out scholarships and apply to a number of colleges and universities. I was accepted to eight schools and then I found out I won a Broad Prize scholarship. I was ecstatic.

When I got to college in Vermont, I faced some of my greatest fears. Not only was I the first person in my family to go college, but I also enrolled in a school far from home in an environment very different from the one in which I grew up in the Bronx. However, amongst fear and uncertainty, I reminded myself of the journey it took to get where I am and kept my eye on the prize. I got involved with residential life, student organizations on campus, and I worked hard to do well in academics.

I'm now a senior majoring in social work, with a minor in English. Time has gone by so quickly, I feel like it was just yesterday when I was a timid freshman. Throughout the last three years I've been a resident advisor, a peer mentor for incoming first-year students, a member of the Black Student Union, a tutor, as well as a student leader on campus. I've found numerous opportunities at UVM and I'm currently the president of the Women's Honor Society, an associate with the Institute for the Recruitment of Teachers, and a McNair scholar, which is a fellowship for undergraduates to conduct research and prepare for graduate school.

After I graduate I plan to pursue a master's in education. The Broad Prize was the seed of hope that fueled my college experience. I want to thank The Broad Foundation once again for this opportunity and its support.