

MEET THE FELLOW

OZIOMA CHINAKA



EDUCATION: B.S. in Human Development

HOMETOWN: Abuja, Nigeria (moved to U.S. at age 6)

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WHAT DREW YOU TO ATTENDING VIRGINIA TECH FOR SCHOOL?

I was drawn to attend Virginia Tech because like my high school it was known for its great family-oriented culture and community. Additionally, it had a great football team, offered me a great financial aid package, and had a motto I could stand by.

WHY DID YOU CHOOSE YOUR MAJOR?

After being an orientation leader the summer before my junior year, I realized how much I loved people, working with people and wanted to learn more about the development of people across a lifespan. The major had a mix of psychology, sociology, and health courses. In addition, the major did not only teach the course subjects but also had a lot of emphasis on applying what we learned to the real world. Lastly, the major had lots of ways for students to get hands-on experience whether it be through service learning or the 288 field study hours required to graduate.

WHAT ARE YOU LOOKING FORWARD TO WITH THE FELLOWSHIP AND THIS EXPERIENCE?

The different projects each department has to offer, being challenged and the ability to learn from others as I grow professionally and personally. In addition, I'm looking forward to meeting individuals in every department that I rotate through that are passionate about the work they do. I hope to gain an in-depth look at certain positions in each department and acquire knowledge in each position that will better aid me in understanding where I see myself in the future and how my skill set is transferable in the world of Higher Ed.

WHAT WOULD YOU DESCRIBE AS YOUR MOST IMPORTANT ATTRIBUTES OR STRENGTH?

My ability to connect with people and my ability to problem-solve, whether it be with people or with a project or task. I am able to look at a situation from more than one perspective.

WHAT'S SOMETHING OUTSIDE OF THE OFFICE YOU'RE MOST PASSIONATE ABOUT?

I'm very passionate about mental health education because it is one of the most prevalent issues in society. I strongly believe that mental health education is important to talk about and teach about. It is an issue that affects everyone at some point in their lives if not directly, indirectly. I find it fascinating to learn about all the meditation practices and all the health benefits associated with it. I love talking to people about the meditation practices I've been through and how it has benefited me personally.

IF YOU COULD ONLY KEEP THREE APPS ON YOUR PHONE, WHAT WOULD THEY BE?

Snapchat, Venmo, and Lyft

HAVE YOU EVER MET ANYONE FAMOUS?

I met Simone Biles at my state championship track meet.

WHAT'S ONE OF YOUR WEIRDEST QUIRKS?

I can do a one-handed cartwheel.

ONE OF YOUR BIGGEST PET PEEVES?

People touching my hair without asking.

ANY PODCAST RECOMMENDATIONS?

I just started listening to a podcast called MindLove on Pandora. I really like it so far and would recommend everyone give it a try to give your mind some love.

WHERE'S ONE PLACE YOU'D LIKE TO VISIT?

Somewhere tropical or somewhere in South America.

WHO IS SOMEONE WHO INSPIRES YOU?

My family inspires me each and every day to be the best I can be. As a first-generation immigrant, it hasn't been an easy road to getting where I am today. Whenever I hit a bump in the road I think about the sacrifice my parents made to give me a better life and their dream for me to be better than they were. My family inspires me to keep going when the road gets hard and with hard work and determination anything is possible.