

## **AFRICOM and Penn graduate students talk college and immigration with high school students in Philadelphia**

By Christiana Kallon

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**Philadelphia, PA-** Members of the University of Pennsylvania's [Black Graduate Women's Association \(BGWA\)](#) and Black Intellectual Group (BIG) partnered with the [Coalition of African and Caribbean Communities in Philadelphia](#) to host an informative college admissions and financial aid workshop this past Saturday, December 3, 2016. Volunteers gathered in Houston Hall, located on Penn's campus, to address anxiety amongst immigrant students attending public high schools across Philadelphia who are preparing for college.

Applying to college is a confusing and stressful process for all students, especially those from immigrant families. Many fear that their educational futures will be jeopardized given political debates on repealing Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) and growing anti-immigrant sentiments and policies.

Admissions officers from Drexel University, the University of Pennsylvania, and Temple University were invited for a panel on the application and financial aid processes, and reassured students of favorable institutional policies towards immigrants and foreign nationals. High school students were also able to ask questions to a panel of graduate students and alumni from all three universities during the second half of the program. Panelists shared their experiences with academics and extra-curricular activities, challenges navigating race and other issues of minorities on campus, and processes of finding employment after graduation.

University of Pennsylvania's president, Amy Gutmann, announced last week that the university will join institutions across the United States in establishing itself as a sanctuary campus for DACA students and other marginalized groups. In addition, the Liberty Scholars Program at Drexel University and Global Scholars Program at Temple University are dedicated to providing quality education to underrepresented populations and facilitating inter-cultural understanding.

The workshop concluded with a presentation by the president of AFRICOM-Philly, Dr. Eric Edi, who discussed immigration rights with participants. "While the election is over and we have to accept the results, it is important to know your rights so that you can protect yourself and your families," he told students.

BGWA and BIG will continue to support AFRICOM-Philly's mission to empower African and Caribbean communities in the Greater Philadelphia area.

*Christiana Kallon is a master's student from Sierra Leone in the international educational development program at the University of Pennsylvania Graduate School of Education. She volunteers at AFRICOM-Philly as their youth and education coordinator.*

Contact: [ckallon@gse.upenn.edu](mailto:ckallon@gse.upenn.edu)