

News Release

Black History Month Spotlight - Amarah Byakweli

By Monica Kustritz - Coordinator for Student Programs on Tuesday, February 7, 2023



Amarah Byakweli is Congolese, with both of her parents being from the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Growing up, Byakweli knew she wanted to explore different countries and cultures, primarily because she wanted to learn more about the DRC of Congo in Africa. Her eagerness to explore her family and their culture relates closely to her passion for traveling, which she had the opportunity to experience by studying abroad in England. Byakweli was heavily involved in athletics throughout her childhood, playing basketball and volleyball, and joining the cheer team in high school. Throughout her time cheering for football and basketball, she served as cheer manager, and later, the head captain. This dedication led to her being recognized for the Leadership Award for Cheer during her senior year.

Although Byakweli initially wanted to go into forensic science, she grew a passion for marketing and international business. Since her junior year of high school, Byakweli has been interning with The BrandLab, a non-profit with a mission to change the face and voice of the marketing and advertising industry. This organization empowers young talent from Indigenous, Black, Brown, AAPI, and Hispanic/Latinx backgrounds to launch sustainable careers in thriving workplaces of creativity, inclusivity, and belonging. Byakweli now sits on the Executive Board of College and Beyond at The BrandLab. Being from Minneapolis, Byakweli has known from a young age that she wanted to attend the University of Minnesota. She chose the Crookston campus due to its smaller size, affordability, and proximity to her home. Over the past 5-6 years, Byakweli has excelled in her college coursework while interning at four advertising agencies including Colle McVoy and SapienRazorfish. She has also worked for Land O'Lakes as a Brand Marketer.

"My goal was to get involved, be a leader, and make an impact," said Byakweli. "And I have done just that."

She joined the cheer team during her freshman year at UMC, and recently got involved with Chi Alpha. She has been involved as a student leader in the positions of lead Community Advisor, Summer Community Advisor, CSA Representative to the Board of Regents, Student Orientation Staff Leader, and Founder and President of BSA. She has been involved on campus in various work-study positions, as well as the Curriculum and Recruiting Committees. Last spring, Byakweli also won the Student of the Year Award. Byakweli celebrates who she is every day, and feels that spreading the knowledge of black history should extend beyond the month of February.

"It's important to acknowledge why these things happened and to focus attention on the contributions of African Americans to the United States," she continued. "I truly believe this should be an everyday thing."

Byakweli emphasized her excitement about what's in store for BSA and its role in the overall culture of UMN Crookston.

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