

Good afternoon. My name is Je'Dynn Fogle and I am from Nicholasville/Lexington Kentucky which means I didn't come far from Berea. It's only about an hour drive. But traveling for that short hour to experience four weeks of Berea College over the summer with 90 other students was the most exciting drive I've ever experienced. See, what you must understand about me is that I love change. I love trying new foods, meeting new people, and switching things up every now and then. College, to me, is the heaven of new. New people, new places, new food, new experiences. So, as one could imagine, I was very eager to attend college.

Since, like many of you, I was that straight "A" student who took multiple AP courses and participated in many extracurricular activities, I believed I was ready for college. I had the drive and the study skills. I was all set. Or so I thought. Participating in Bridge helped me realize I needed *enhanced* study skills and way more than a drive. I needed energy, constant refocusing, study friends, my faith than ever more, and the one thing that seemed most scarce: time. But really, I just needed a new mindset. Things weren't like high school. After pulling an "all-nighter" within the second day of class and receiving my first ever C within the first week, I realized that pretty quickly. As one could understand, I grew frustrated--bitter even. But being upset wasn't going to solve my time-management problem or raise my grade up. That's when accepting that everything isn't always going to be easy helped things get better. Understanding that *challenge* is necessary to take me from my past perfectionist, overachiever self to a new resilient, firm Je'Dynn. That's what Bridge did. It tore down my ideas about how "great" I was. Simultaneously, I was built into a better and stronger student with a transformed mindset and enhanced reading, writing, time-managing, and coping skills. That is the best thing I could ever ask for.

Because when you feel like you've mastered it all, you get proud and overestimate yourself. You believe that since you've succeeded before you can do the same thing again. But when you're on a new field with different rules, that's when reality hits you in the face and shows you otherwise. Attending Berea will be that reality check since our abilities are constantly challenged and pushed to the next level. But fret not. We each may be on our own paths that will consist of hardships, but we're not walking them alone. Not only do we have God behind us supporting us, but we also have the entire Berea community surrounding and encouraging us. That sort of environment--where we are bettered together--is one that I can't wait to thrive in with all of you.

Thank you.