A close-up, profile view of a young Black woman with her hair pulled back, looking thoughtfully to the left. She is wearing a light-colored blazer over a dark top and a pearl necklace. The background is dark and out of focus.

**They take students out of their
comfort zone. They took me
all the way to South Africa.**

There's no question the Advanced Preparation Program was daunting, but it was good to feel a challenge. My professors laid down the structure for what college was really like: they wanted more from me—more work, more things out of the ordinary. They made my résumé unique, and that will take me farther than anything.

Bianca Rhodes, empowered graduate
Graduating year – 2005
Major – Mass Communications
Occupation – Editor, Media Monitoring Corporation
Hometown – Brooklyn Park, MN




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**I gave them three months.
They gave me the best chance
I was ever going to get.**

I started college two days after graduating from high school. And on my first day in the Advanced Preparation Program, I met 40 students with the same worries I had. But our professors put us through an academic boot camp with the training and counseling we needed to get ready for anything. They taught us we could do whatever we wanted if we weren't afraid to get our hands dirty. They were right.

Ramon Nuñez, grateful graduate
Graduating year – 2001
Major – Mass Communications; TV & Film Production
Occupation – Executive Producer, Colle & McVoy
Hometown – Milwaukee, WI




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I was the first in my family
to go to college. Five months later,
I was the first in my family
to go to Africa.

When I went to Saint Cloud State University's
Advanced Preparation Program, I noticed the
students were a lot like me—we were all there to get
a head start on college. That gave me confidence,
and my professors gave me opportunity. I'll get my
degree in December, I'll go on to grad school,
and somehow, I'll change the world.

Rodriguez Barnett, inspired student

Graduating year – 2007

Major – Mass Communications

Hometown – St. Paul, MN



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