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NASA CAPACITY BUILDING PROGRAM INTERN

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WHAT ARE YOUR GOALS?

After my undergraduate studies, I would like to attend graduate school to study either applied mathematics, data science, and eventually earn my PhD. After that, I would like to work for NASA or another government agency, or even possibly go into academia. This summer, I would like to gain interpersonal experience, hone my technical skills, and continue to network.

HOW DOES NASA PROGRESS THESE GOALS?

I think that learning about the Earth and the Universe is vital to understanding the physical aspects of what is around us for general knowledge's sake, but also for understanding human thought and philosophy: Why are we here, and what does it mean? I attribute my understanding of these questions to my faith; I cannot deny the world around me and what it is clearly showing me. After all, I am a person who thrives by analysis and data, NASA values data, whether it be quantitative or qualitative, scientific or artistic. NASA considers the intrinsic value of every piece of data, a skill that will be priceless to me as I move forward with my studies and potential career in data science.

WHAT MAJOR CHALLENGE HAVE YOU OVERCOME?

One of my biggest challenges, that at times I have been both proud and self-conscious of, is that I am a first-generation, low-income student. I am the first person in my family to attend college. The College of William & Mary is a predominantly white, wealthy school, and when you are neither of those things, finding people to connect with and finding resources is difficult.

HOW DOES THIS CHALLENGE KEEP YOU STRIVING FOR YOUR GOALS?

Through this challenge, I have two options: pity myself or make the best of my situation. It is not bad, nor is it a moral failing to lament about your struggles. I am unashamed to admit that I do both. I have to make my own connections, which is a lot more work, but I know that in the long run, I will be better off for it and a lot more independent.

WHAT MOTIVATES YOU?

I have a few things that motivate me, one of the highest is my family. My mother and I are very close and daily she lets me know that no matter what mistakes I make or successes I have, her love is unfailing. I lean on my friends and am motivated by my faith; so much of my motivation comes from God and gratitude for the many blessings the Holy Spirit has given me. I am a self-motivated person, and I take a lot pride in knowing that when there is something that I am committed to, I jump at the opportunity to be as hands-on as possible.

