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EDITORIAL & OPINION

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STEP Program Participant Now Ivy-Bound

Aug 12, 2016

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PHOENIX POLICE ARE HIRING

While a student at Ithaca College, Malcolm Temple traveled to and worked in Rwanda. He is now headed to Harvard.



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Story written by Jaideen Cobb

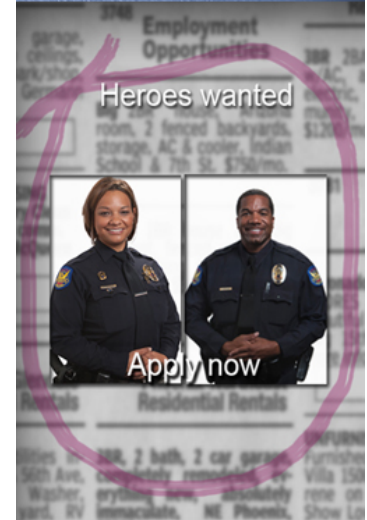
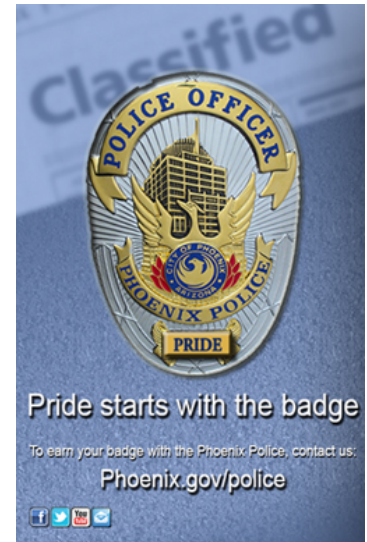
Mesa Community College Professor Dr. Karen Hardin developed an academic enrichment program in which students reach academic accomplishments in higher learning institutions. One student, Malcolm Temple, has landed admission at the nation's top Ivy League college this fall – Harvard.

Dr. Hardin developed the STEP (Students Striving Toward Excellent Performance) program in 2008 at Mesa Community College to provide an opportunity for African American high school students to experience college culture prior to attending a four-year college.

In addition to providing students with an exceptional college experience, students within the STEP Program are stewarded under the watchful eye of nurturing faculty members at MCC. Dr. Hardin anticipated that through the STEP Program students would have an increase in motivation to continue to receive an education after high school and to reach their full potential.

One student to experience the benefits of Dr. Hardin's STEP program is Malcolm Temple. Temple first attended STEP as a home-schooled high school sophomore at the age of 15. He shares, "Overall the experience definitely gave me a strong foundation for my future. Even though going to college was always an expectation for me, it was also very intimidating. So having done the program and gained skills such as, discipline and communicating effectively with my professors and also how to take advantage of different resources on the campus, like the tutoring center or writing center. These things that I learned from the program really allowed me to hit the ground running when I went off to a four-year college."

Following the program, Temple earned his undergraduate degree at Ithaca College in Ithaca, New York. At Ithaca College, Temple was a culture and communications major and was able to study abroad in Quito, Ecuador and Paris, France. After graduating he returned to France to teach English in a public high school before moving to Rwanda where he has worked on development projects for the United Nations World Food Programme for the past year.



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Now Temple is starting a new academic journey at one of the most prestigious higher learning institutions – Harvard University. He begins his Masters program in public policy with a concentration on international trade and finance at Harvard’s John F. Kennedy School of Government in Cambridge, Massachusetts this fall. When applying to graduate programs Temple also applied to Columbia University, Princeton, Georgetown and John Hopkins University, where he was also accepted.

When received his acceptance letter from the Cambridge Ivy-League school his choice was made. Temple adds, “Applying to the ivy league schools wasn’t about prestige. It was about knowing they offer a platform to be a positive image for my community and receive world-class training to make positive change.”

Although Africa-Americans are underrepresented within Ivy-league institutions Temple believes that others should try to break generational cycles. He stated, “I think that African-Americans shouldn’t limit themselves because they didn’t necessarily see that space for them, and especially for first generation college students.” He continues by saying, “African American having a deficiency of positive reputations, I think it’s important for other African Americans to see other African Americans attending Ivy-League colleges or traveling abroad.”

As this once STEP participant becomes Ivy-bound this fall, he believes that among the components of his academic success is the willingness to put in long study hours. Temple says, “I made the most of the opportunities and privileges that I had growing up. I’m still just a regular person, I had really extraordinary experiences and now I’m going off to a prestigious school, but I would say that my life isn’t that extraordinary. My family and friends keep me grounded.”

Long term, Temple aspires to work with growing economies particularly in the continent of Africa. He shares, “Many economies in Africa are booming right now, but effective fiscal policy is really needed to help sustain growth, and this is one area I hope to make an impact.”

Temple never really imagined he’d go to Harvard University. He now stands as a pillar of academic success within our community and testimony to the power of an academic enrichment program that can perpetuate a positive outcome within a young person’s life.

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