

2013 student commencement speaker finds career helping others “beat the odds”

by Alyssa Kadansky - Tuesday, June 10, 2014

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The 2013 University of Wisconsin Oshkosh spring student commencement speaker, Anthony Miller '13, of Appleton, gave a speech that had the audience on their feet in a standing ovation.

Today, Miller is spreading his message of “beating the odds” to other African American students at Fox Valley Technical College and the Appleton Area School District.

After graduating last May, Miller was hired as a student adviser and near-peer outreach crew supervisor for the Milwaukee Public Schools TEAM UP College Access Center. In this position, he helped students fill out college applications, find grants and scholarships, write personal statements and apply for financial aid.

Currently, Miller is working as the African American recruitment and retention specialist at Fox Valley Technical College, where he helps students in their transition to the school.

“I assist them in the application process,” Miller said. “Once they become a student, I am there to provide them with necessary resources to ensure that they complete their program successfully.”

Miller also works as the African American cultural support specialist for the Appleton Area School District, where he helps African American students improve their academic and social skills. He also encourages them and helps them prepare for post-secondary education.

While at UW Oshkosh, Miller earned a bachelor’s degree in communication, as well as a minor in African American studies, which he feels has benefited him in educating others about African American history. As the African American Club adviser at three Appleton high schools, Miller finds the knowledge he acquired helpful in teaching students.

“I enjoy educating members of the clubs on various topics that range anywhere from slavery to the Civil Rights Movement,” Miller said.

Like Miller, UW Oshkosh also has a commitment to foster diversity through the implementation of inclusive excellence. Inclusive excellence became especially prevalent during Miller’s last two years at UW Oshkosh and taught him to be more accepting of all forms of diversity.

Since making his moving commencement speech last May, Miller feels he has continued to “beat the odds.”

“Being a young African American man in America, it seems that odds are always stacked against me,” Miller said. “What I try to do is continue to educate myself and knock down barriers as I move along.”

In his professional life, Miller has made it his mission to educate and advocate to other young African American boys that they too can beat the odds.

“It’s not really about me,” Miller said. “It’s about inspiring others to do something great.”

While he is educating others and pursuing a career in motivational speaking, Miller is also continuing his own education at UW Oshkosh by pursuing his master’s degree in educational leadership. After completing his degree, he will have the opportunity to work in both the K-12 setting, as well as in higher education.

“My main focus is making sure that I am prepared for any opportunity that may present itself,” Miller said. “We never know what God has planned for us, so I try not to anticipate what He will do or what He has in store.”

The degree that he earned at UW Oshkosh has been advantageous for Miller in both his personal and professional life. With career success already underway, the future continues to be bright and the opportunities endless.

“Having a degree has opened up a world of opportunity for me,” he said. “It has also added to my credibility and has been positive for my reputation... I do believe that UWO has added value to my life.”