

"How I Got Here: Angelica—Student-focused Video"

Angelica: My name is Angelica and I'm from Houston, Texas. When I skate I feel like I'm free. Most of my friends from my neighborhood are either pregnant, in jail or dead. There was a lot of gangs, a lot of violence. I had a dream to go to college, but didn't think I could afford that. I'm the first person in my family to go to college, and I'm going to graduate without a penny of debt.

My mother was a housekeeper. Since I was young I would go cleaning houses with her, and I hated every moment of it. I wanted a different lifestyle, and she would always tell me that's why you need to get an education. Most of us want to go to college, but how do we pay for it right? That's the problem. Growing up that was always the issue. We didn't have the money, we can't do it. We don't have no money, we can't do it. That's when I took that initiative and said, "You know what, I'm going to apply for scholarships," and started researching and they would tell me in 500 words tell me your life story. "I'm trying to make it and I had a rough background like many other people, but I'm trying to make it. Invest in me, help me, and I'll show you why I'm worth it." You sell them your dream. You tell them what your dream is, they want to know what makes you different.

I got to Houston-Tillotson University in Austin, and the problem was, it was exactly 2,400 dollars to register as an incoming freshman. I had 500 dollars saved. I was like, "Where am I going to get these 2,000 dollars," and that's when I got a call that I got the Houston-Tillotson Houston Alumni Scholarship, which was 2,000 dollars. I know if it wasn't for those 2,000 dollars I wouldn't be here today. It was a differentiating factor between whether I'm going to be a housekeeper or if I'm going to go to college. I needed to try to raise more money for tuition and fees and I realized most of the successful students are in organization. As soon as I started college I played soccer. I became freshman class president. I tutored.

Speaker 2: When I first met you I thought okay, "This girl is pretty ambitious and stuff."

Speaker 3: I thought you were crazy. Anything she puts her mind to it she can do it. She's dedicated.

Angelica: I got granted with the position of being a resident assistant, which paid my room and board. I met the professors. I got good recommendation letters so when I would write for scholarships. I filled out one scholarship a week. As an incoming sophomore I got the Dubois Scholarship which pays my tuition and fees, and then I got 8,000 dollars, 18,000 dollars, 25,000 dollars, which will help me continue paying for my junior and senior year.

I'm a political science major and my dream is to be a campaign manager for presidential elections or be speaker of the house. Last semester I was an intern for a candidate that's running for governor.

"How's it going?"

Speaker 4: "Good, how are you?"

Angelica: I'm now interning for a candidate that's running for state representative, and I'm also interning for an advertising agency. In order for my future hope for running for office, I need to learn how to communicate with the public.

Speaker 3: Angelica is -

Speaker 5: Smart.

Speaker 3: Ebullient.

Speaker 6: Gelli is busy.

Speaker 2: She's smooth, you know.

Speaker 3: Just cheerful, just joyful.

Speaker 2: Passionate, enthusiastic. That's a passion, that's a passion. But she double passionate.

Speaker 6: That girl knows how to win a scholarship.

Angelica: Hey mom, hi Anthony.

Speaker 7: Hi, what are you doing?

Angelica: You all got to step it up. It is your job to be better than me, and we all know it's an expectation to go to school, and they know there's no way around that. Going to college without any funds was really scary, but you have to figure out a way. You have to figure out a way to do it. How I found a way was scholarships. After college I'm either going to Washington or I'm either going to law school, it's one of those.

It's funny as a child how I hated cleaning houses, because when I walk around the capital I think to myself, "Oh I'm going to clean this house." I'm not letting society destroy my dreams. I'm making my dreams bigger and you're not going to stop me.