

This is Miesha's first year as a mentor, but she is not a stranger to TRIO UB, as she is an alumna of the St. Olaf UB program! She is a mentor to Highland Park Junior student Ayane.

Miesha is originally from Louisiana but moved to Minnesota the summer before her freshman year of high school. Her father was in the Air Force, and they lived in a few different places, but Louisiana was home. Miesha grew up in a single-parent home with three older siblings and three younger siblings. She had the privilege of growing up with her grandparents and her great-grandparents. Miesha was a first-generation college student and was the first-ever to attend college on both her father's and mother's sides of the family. Currently, she lives in Saint Paul with her two daughters.

After graduating high school, Miesha started college at the College of Saint Catherine (now St. Catherine University) and then transferred to Augsburg University. She chose St. Kate's because she didn't think seriously in high school, so her grades were not the best. She then toured Augsburg and fell in love with the community, and they had a great social work program. Miesha started off majoring in social work and then changed her major to youth and family ministry and minored in social work instead. A few years later, she returned to Augsburg and obtained her Master's degree in Educational Leadership.

Currently, Miesha works for Saint Paul Public Schools in the Office of Family Engagement and Community Partnerships. She serves as the African American Cultural Specialist, and Miesha leads the Parents of African American Students Advisory Council. She also works closely with all the schools in the district to ensure they are effectively engaging the families they serve.

Working in education has made Miesha see the huge disconnect between home and school. She recently started hosting workshops for parents to educate them on how the school system works and how to advocate for their child(ren) needs—also teaching them the importance of being involved in their child's education and school attendance. Miesha is in the process of creating training and developing a curriculum for similar workshops. She hopes to turn these workshops into something that school districts across the country will start offering families.

As a UB alum, Miesha jumped at the opportunity to mentor for UB because she also had a mentor while in the program. The UB staff and her mentor made a significant impact in her life, and she also wanted to help shape the life of a young person and influence their future, just as UB and her mentor did for her.

A piece of advice she would like to share with UB students is to use all of your resources. "Don't be afraid to ask for help when you need it. It's never too late to start preparing for graduation. Meet with your counselor and figure out what you need to do to stay on track or get on track. Look at all of your choices for school, don't feel pressured to attend a 4-year school, look into 2-year schools, and trades."

UB wants to thank Miesha for sharing her story and experience with us! We are excited to have her join the UB Mentor Program.

