



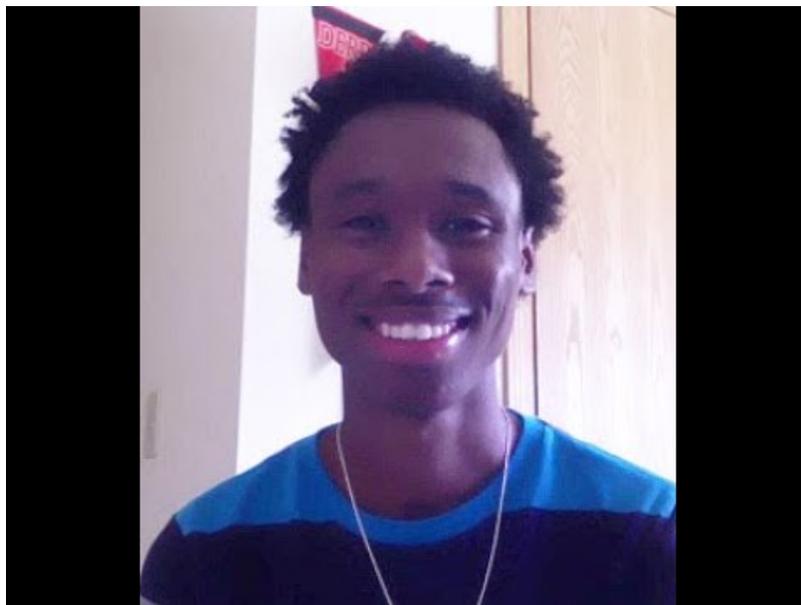
Taijhan Nelson
Millikin University
ACI General Scholarship

Taijhan Nelson came to Millikin University from Murphysboro, Illinois, to study health fitness and recreation, intending to use his education for a career in recreational therapy. What drew him to Millikin were his conversations with the cross country coach, Andrew Craycraft, and the possibility of attending a school with small classes. Plus, he knew his chances of career success after college were very good.



Now entering his senior year, Nelson says he hopes to work specifically with people living with disabilities. "I chose that major because it ties into that a lot more than other majors would," Nelson says. "I find all of that really interesting. I really like to help people."

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Nelson is the recipient of an ACI General Scholarship, a scholarship he qualified for with help from his financial advisor at Millikin, Nancy Askins. The scholarship made a world of difference. Without it, Nelson says didn't have enough funds to enroll.

Financially, things have not been easy for Nelson. Compounding the situation was the news early in his college career that his mother and brothers were homeless, while he was at school. "It definitely affected me," Nelson says. "I wanted to drop out and get a job so I could go back home and help. But I knew that wouldn't be the best thing for me. And my Mom knew that me staying here and me getting a degree, I'd be able to help them a lot more if I did that, rather than leaving." Fortunately, the family situation has since improved. Nelson's mother is working again, and she and his brothers have moved to South Dakota.

"Last year, I was getting emails about how I could go be disenrolled," he says because of his financial situation. "Me getting that scholarship definitely helped me, big time. I wouldn't even be here right now without it." Plus, remaining in school will also give him the ability to help him take care of his family, he says.

After college, Nelson says he is thinking about seeking a certification in recreational therapy. He is already a certified personal trainer. Nelson is a long-distance and cross-country runner at Millikin, something he's been doing since grade school. He also works at Decatur Indoor Sports Center in the fitness department. After he finishes his education, Nelson says he's interested in working somewhere in Georgia, a place he has visited and appreciates.