

Good Evening to all,

My name is Ayalew Taye. I am originally from Ethiopia. I am currently a senior in college and I am on the way to graduating this month from Georgetown University. Emigrating from Ethiopia in 2002 has given me countless opportunities that I never would have had otherwise. Upon my arrival in the United States, I enrolled as a freshman, attending Portland High School in Maine. Then I decided to transfer to Cushing Academy, a boarding school in Ashburnham Massachusetts since at the time my English was weak.

In both schools, I got involved in school afternoon programs which have had an enormous impact not only in interaction with others, but also on how I have approached my commitments. As a result of my academic/athletic achievements, I was contacted and recruited by Georgetown University. Prior to this, I had no knowledge of Georgetown University. I did my little research and talked with people. I connected with students who were attending Georgetown and also students who had already graduated. Right away, I learned how good Georgetown University is in both academic and athletics.

After that, my decision came down to the concern of tuition. I was promised full financial support through athletic and financial aid scholarship. Grateful of that, I right away committed to attend Georgetown. At first, I didn't know what to expect. I came in summer to attend Community Scholars program. My freshman and sophomore year, I lived on campus.

Learning to adjust to a new culture was one of the difficult challenges I had faced. In the beginning, this challenge stirred fear in my heart. However, through the help of Georgetown community, I was able to make Georgetown my home. Comfortable enough, my junior year, I moved to off-campus housing in Fox-Hall area and I am still living there. In fact, I am living there next year as well.

Athletics has a major impact in my life. It played a pivotal role not only helping me adjust to the new life I faced in America connecting me to people, but also in the way I approached my commitments. It taught me management, discipline, determination, manners etc. That is partly because most of the time that I dedicated to running track. I have endured many hardships, but I have learned to balance my life and stay on top of things. Since Athletics had been a big part of my life, I continued to get involved in Athletics at Georgetown as well.

At first, I was actually concerned that Georgetown does not have a track. I was told that GU was using a neighborhood track in Burleith which is only 320 meter. For a track athlete, a 400 meter track is a dream come true. For Georgetown, considering its past history of track and field, not having a track of its own is, I'm sorry to say, somewhat disappointing.

On the other hand, I am proud to say that both the men's and women's track and field teams practicing on an off-campus field are doing very well for themselves. We use the track about four days a week and over an hour each day. We see people walking around the outside lane when we work out. We see people walking their dogs and playing with their dogs on the field. Before we start getting serious to work out and after we work out sometimes we throw the balls to the dogs or talk to the people who are walking. When we start working out they make sure the walkers are not in the way and the dogs are not running on the track. This tells me that there is an understanding and respect between the community members and the GU athletes.

When we are on the track, we feel as if the field is our own. In fact, I am aware that the track program contributed to the mending of the track. I asked one of my coaches what we did and he told me that not long ago, it was a dirt track and the Georgetown track program helped financially to repair the track. In addition, just last semester, the whole track team helped with planting trees around the inside and the outside of the track. It is also my understanding that the Georgetown intramural track team is also using the track.

All in all, my experience at Georgetown has been great. The experience will be a part of me. I am graduating in May with a government major and Sociology minor. I am and will be forever grateful.

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for the grand opportunity. Last but not least, I believe that Georgetown is a great matrix to the community. It brings people from different nations and with their own unique culture. As Georgetown Athletes, we are not only representing Georgetown as a national level, but also we are representing DC. For instance, if I remember it correctly, this year's motto is 'We are Georgetown and DC is our play ground'. As a track athlete, to represent Georgetown, I highly recommend that we allowed using the Burleith track. In fact, if possible, expanding the track will allow us to host big track meets which will be a great benefit for the area.

Ayalew Taye
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