



A “Life-Changing” Summer Experience for Stephon Roberts at the University of Denver’s Pioneer Prep

For many UChicago Charter School Woodlawn (UCW) Campus students, summer is a time for exploration and personal growth. This was true for Stephon Roberts, who just began his senior year at UCW. For three days, Roberts took part in Pioneer Prep, a college readiness program for rising high school juniors and seniors of color at the University of Denver.

On the sprawling university campus, high school students from across the country gathered to learn details about college access and career planning. They took part in one of two concurrent leadership institutes, one for Latinx students and another for Black and African American students. Participants enjoyed leadership and identity affirming activities, together and apart.

“Pioneer Prep was a magnificent program,” says Roberts. “We were exposed to speakers from our own backgrounds and all of the participating students were friendly and engaged. I learned about self-love, the power of the pause, college admissions criteria, leadership skills, patience, appreciation for my culture, professionalism, and so much more.”

Roberts is no stranger to leadership and achievement. He skipped the seventh grade, is a stand-out scholar at UCW, and is also a member of [Chicago Scholars](#), a seven-year program designed to help academically ambitious, first generation college students from under-resourced communities get to and through college.

Excited to begin his college applications this year, Roberts looks forward to higher education and pursuing a degree in business and entrepreneurship. He hopes to start his own business.

Reflecting on his experience at Pioneer Prep, he says, “I would 100 percent recommend this program to other students. This opportunity really has changed my life. I think differently and have a different perception of myself. This program is not only fun, it gives you motivation, love, and inspires you to be your best self.”



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