

Faith Chumo



"I grew up in Nairobi. I always knew I wanted med school, and have always been both outspoken and academic. I'm also a feminist, even though my family doesn't understand that; my older brother & father especially. As much as they support me, I've always been misunderstood. They think I'm too radical; my dad even told me that feminism "is a cult". I've always been the little girl in my family, and in African communities, males are heavily celebrated. There have been female genocides, where mothers kill their own female babies because they are ashamed to bear them. Coming to the U.S., I quickly found relief in a place where women's rights were both celebrated and studied academically. This intersection of my passions & beliefs brought me to double major in History of Science and Medicine, and WGSS (Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies). What I love most about Yale are the women and faculty I have access to. My first encounter was with Paula Kavathas, from the School of Medicine's immunology department.

She would literally call me during finals season with words of encouragement, reminding me how strong I am as a woman. I have similar relationships with Dr. Christine Ngaruiya in emergency medicine, and Maria Trumpler, the Director of the Office of LGBTQ Resources. All of the women at Yale have the strength to be who they are, and strongly encourage others to follow their examples and become leaders in their fields.

Coming to Yale, however, I definitely faced challenges. I didn't "know I was black" until I came to the U.S. People assume I am African-American, not African, and they don't understand that the two are different, and the assumptions you make about each of them are too.

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I also consider myself very religious. When people ask, "Who are you?", I like to answer with an explanation: I feel I'm made from God, and that he resides within me. My discipline, self-worth, mental peace, love, and joy come from that. I am Faith. And God is in me, just like in the Color Purple, where God is in the trees and in the birds and in you and me."

-Faith Chumo '20. Check out her blog on feminism at hadithizaimani.wordpress.com! #HumansOfOISS

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