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Jamaican Accepted to PHD Program at Princeton

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Jamaican Avery-Kai Barnett will pursue a Ph.D. in Public Affairs Science, Technology and Environmental Policy at Princeton University in the fall of 2021. In 2017, Barnett, 17, succeeded in her plan to achieve 19 Caribbean Secondary Education Certificate

(CSEC) subjects, an IGCSE (O' level), four GCE A/S levels, and two GCE A' levels. According to her mother Dr. Janine Dawkins, this was her daughter's plan as she had decided to become an orthopedic surgeon early on and knew it would take about 14 years of study after high school. She began preparations to leave school at fifth form and go abroad to attend college.

Barnett decided to attend Grinnell, a small college in Iowa, after being accepted to 11 colleges, all of which offered various types and amounts of financial aid. She chose Grinnell because of its diverse student population, opportunities for study overseas, and academic flexibility. Traveling to the United States to pursue her education was not the first time Barnett left home. In 2016, she was one of 19 students from throughout the Caribbean to participate in a four-week summer program in innovation, science, and engineering at the [University of the West Indies](#) Cave Hill campus in Barbados.

Barnett distinguished herself at Grinnell in numerous ways before graduating with a degree in Physics. She served as Cultural Attache through the Grinnell College Office of International Student Affairs and taught students at Davis Elementary in Jamaica in 2018. From 2020 to the present, she was a senior interviewer who interviewed prospective students; from 2019 to the present she served as an Advisory Committee Student Representative working to implement programs and evaluate funding proposals from students and faculty members for various events or conferences; served as an Intercultural Engagement and Leadership Curriculum Intern, was an undergraduate teaching assistant in physics and a science community leaders, and tutored students in physics.

In 2017, Barnett co-founded Akaisiba, a start-up seasonal

nonprofit organization that raised money for various purposes through the sale of baked goods and other commodities. She was a CIMES Student Intern at Princeton University where she validated WAVEWATCH III simulations under hurricanes in shallow and deep water. In 2019, she was a summer intern at Emera in Barbados where she had experience in the Generation, Distribution and Asset Management departments. Barnett noted her strong interest in the energy sector and her passion for creating and providing economically feasible, sustainable, and renewable future technologies. Her activities and society memberships at Grinnell included Black Students in STEM, African and Caribbean Students' Union, Admissions and Financial Aid Committee.

Among Barnett's honors and awards are the Marie Nesbitt Promise Prize, which is presented to a second/third-year student of African descent for academic excellence, leadership potential, and willingness to participate in community outreach; Best Overall Performance in CSEC-1st from the Jamaica Association of Principals of Secondary Schools given to the most outstanding Jamaica taking the Caribbean Secondary Education Certificate exam; the Sister Maureen Clare Award from [Immaculate Conception High School](#) in Jamaica.

In a Facebook post, Barnett thanked everyone who helped her "get to this point," including her schools, parents, and friends. "I cannot highlight everyone individually in this post, but I am so grateful. I am excited for what's to come in Graduate school, and the future changes I can make," she added.

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