



March 2023

# NALA(STEM) Newsletter

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# ILSAMP 2023

NALA(STEM) members Paul Faronbi and Darcae Holmes attended the 2023 Illinois LSAMP Symposium from Feb 24 -25, a conference aimed at supporting the growth and developmental needs of underrepresented minority students in STEM.





NALA (STEM)

# REFERRAL CHALLENGE

<https://linktr.ee/nalastem>



**ALL YOU HAVE TO DO IS :**

- 1** Invite a friend to join NALA by April 30, 2023.
- 2** Tell them to enter your name as the referrer during sign up.

The top 3 recruiters will have a chance to win a gift card!

**GET READY. GET  
SET. RECRUIT!**



# Get to know our Executive Staff

## Keanna Johnson

### Social Media Chair



What university are you currently at, and what kind of research are you doing?

I'm a graduate student at the University of North Texas Health Science Center, pursuing a Master of Science in Public Health, with a focus in Epidemiology. The lab I'm in researches HIV and breast cancer health disparities. I hope to be able to make a direct impact within communities, by prioritizing what community members say they need, instead of what we (the researchers) think they need.

What was it like finishing your undergraduate degree in chemistry during the pandemic?

The pandemic effected my work ethic. Being online, school didn't feel real, it was just something I had to get through. It was so hard to connect with teachers, and it was so easy to get distracted. I was forced to hold myself accountable. I had to train myself to want to learn. It definitely feels like adulting!

What has been challenging about grad school? How are you navigating that challenge?

My biggest challenge is imposter syndrome. In undergrad, I had my set group, we were the ones always asking questions, going above and beyond expectations. But coming to a new school, in a completely different research area, the imposter syndrome was strong. I questioned whether I should be there, I felt like I had no idea what I was doing. But then I found someone who told me that I was chosen for a reason, that I'm supposed to be here. So I keep telling myself that. And I keep finding my people.

What advice do you have for someone who is making the transition into grad school?

Always ask questions. Never be afraid to ask questions. If you feel like it's a dumb question, you can always ask the professor directly. If you don't know what to do, just talk to someone. Hearing someone else's perspective is always helpful. And by talking to people you make connections. Always look for guidance.

# GET INVOLVED!

Come join us at NALA(STEM)!  
We currently have several open positions.

NALA(STEM) MENTORSHIP  
COMMITTEE MEMBER

NALA(STEM) OUTREACH  
COMMITTEE MEMBER

[For position descriptions and more information click here!](#)

