



# ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

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## MENDUYARKA SAMUEL DENNIS

UNITE ALUMNI

I am a rising high school senior attending the Science Leadership Academy. I am planning to major in biomedical or mechanical engineering in college.

### WORDS OF ADVICE

This program helps put wandering thoughts and ideas in order. Be prepared to have an initial plan once the program is over. The plan is just a start — it won't be "foolproof" — but it will provide the inspiration to stick with a mindset and commit to your future goals.

### BEST THINGS ABOUT THE PROGRAM

Thanks to the advice the teaching fellows gave us, the connections we high school students made with college students in the program were great motivators, since we all shared an interest in engineering. With stimulating conversations, with flow from both sides, the program wasn't like an average classroom program. Also, it's easy to feel discouraged from applying to attend big universities like the University of Pennsylvania, but working at UPenn helped me figure out the logistical components of the school itself which made the university less intimidating. I'm now planning to apply to UPenn and other universities since I feel more comfortable on a big college campus. My mentors came from all over the country. With their help, and especially the help of Daniel Ueda [the UPenn UNITE site director], I was able to maneuver around the campus while gaining more knowledge in the field I love. I was thrilled when Dan, who is part of the UPenn GRASP Lab, offered me an internship during school to help out with First Lego League Robotics.

### HOW PARTICIPATING IN AEOP INSPIRED YOU TO ADVANCE IN STEM

Since middle school, I have been interested in pursuing a biomedical or mechanical engineering major in college. I love medicine and engineering, so biomedical engineering is a perfect combination of the two. In the AEOP program, I was able to think about colleges that matched my interest areas the most. I focused on using math and science skills to pursue a career based on helping others, and now my passion can become a reality.

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