



Alumni Spotlight  
March 2021



**TOSEN NWADEI**  
2012 OSSI ALUM

**EDUCATION**

BPh, Finance, University of Pittsburgh 2016

PhD, Organizations & Management, Emory University, Expected 2023



**EMORY**  
UNIVERSITY

**Can you describe your role and responsibilities?**

My research is on White-centric norms in organizations and society. As of late, I've been particularly interested in how hairstyles may act as a medium for exacerbating, or attenuating, inequality. After finishing undergrad, I worked in management consulting with Accenture. Following that, I briefly worked with Ellucian where I did corporate strategy.

**What excites you most about your current position?**

I appreciate being a PhD student because I'm responsible for learning how to do research, but the topics I do research on are largely driven by my personal interests. So, it gives me the opportunity to show some of my creativity, indulge my curiosity, and test my intuitions about the world in a really rigorous and thoughtful way. I can have an idea while I'm in the shower, talk to a friend about it over breakfast, and have a research project underway in the next day or two. I really enjoy learning cool and interesting things, so I see this as an awesome career.

**What advice do you have for future OSSI Fellows?**

I think research experience goes a long way. A PhD will amount to, more or less, 4 to 6 years of research. So, one great indicator that you're a good fit for a PhD program is if you have some research experience from your time as an undergraduate student (even if it's just a capstone research project, honors thesis, etc.). Try to do well in your coursework and ask your professors if they know of any research opportunities for you to get involved with. There are also a lot of summer research programs that provide excellent opportunities for students to learn how to do research as well. Find mentors who can guide you through the process, because they'll make all the difference!

**What was your experience like during OSSI?**

When I did OSSI in 2012, I knew virtually nothing about research. I studied finance and economics in undergrad, and in general, research wasn't a major focus of my curriculum (although I learned lots of other really cool and useful things). But I knew I loved learning and I knew I was interested in doing a PhD, so OSSI was great for providing me more insights about that. Specifically, I got my first inside look at the research process and what that would look like as a PhD student. OSSI was really pivotal in sparking my curiosity in doing research, and I think that reflected in how I spent my remaining time in undergrad. I was really set on trying to learn more about doing a PhD and trying to position myself for that.

**Do you know of any exciting opportunities (research assistantships, post-docs, corporate opportunities/jobs, internships) that other fellows or alums may be interested in?**

Wharton hosts IDDEAS every year for URM students interested in doing a PhD in any business discipline. I believe there are some schools on the west coast in California that will be launching their own version of IDDEAS as well (if they haven't started already). The Harvard Business School has full time Research Assistant positions every year, so that's another great option for people looking to get some research experience. Also, consider the Research Fellows program at the Stanford Graduate School of Business. You're a paid research assistant for 2 years and get tuition waivers to take classes anywhere at Stanford. Northwestern's Kellogg School of Management recently started a similar program, too. The Ross School of Business at the University of Michigan also has a postbac program for students interested in doing a PhD in a business discipline. NYU Stern has a similar program, too. I'm more familiar with some of these programs than others, but the ones I'm familiar with have been phenomenally successful in placing students in PhD programs. Most of these programs are also geared towards underrepresented minority students, too.

**During Tosen's time at OSSI, Tosen worked with:**

Faculty mentor: Dr. Lisa Walker

Graduate Student Mentor: Dr. Jessie Olien

**Want to reach out?**



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