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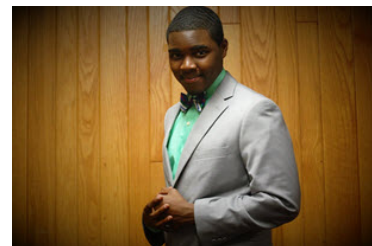
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COMMUNICATION STUDIES JUNIOR NAMED EPICENTER INNOVATION FELLOW

Deborrius "DJ" Jeffries, a communication studies junior, was one of 155 students at 47 institutions of high education to be named a University Innovation Fellow by the National Center for Engineering Pathways to Innovation (Epicenter). DJ, along with Mara Decker, Trevor Jones, and Asia Lee, is part of a four-person team of Fellows chosen at Southern Illinois University, Carbondale.



Each student must have a faculty sponsor to apply for the program; Dr. Craig Engstrom, an assistant professor focusing on organizational communication in the Department of Communication Studies, is DJ's sponsor.

When asked why he thought DJ should be chosen as a Fellow, Dr. Engstrom said, "Because we share a passion for entrepreneurship, we have had many productive conversations about innovation and the idea of communication in entrepreneurship studies. He understands the importance of doing research as part of the process of ideation and, more importantly, is able to communicate complex ideas in simple ways."

The Epicenter program was developed to allow Fellows to work together to promote change and innovation at their institutions. Fellows must first complete six weeks of online training before they travel to the University Innovation Fellows Annual Meetup in Silicon Valley. Leticia Britos Cavagnaro, co-leader of the University Innovation Fellows program said, "Throughout this program, Fellows learn how to analyze their campus ecosystems for new opportunities, understand the needs of stakeholders at their schools, collaborate with peers from different disciplines, and solve problems that have no clear answers."

The four-person team of Fellows at SIU, Carbondale have each developed individual strategic priorities as part of their Fellowships. DJ's priority is called, "Communication Station" and highlights his interest in organizational communication. DJ's idea is to "to foster a productive communicative environment for students in the engineering department to communicate with students in the marketing department. History tells us that when these connections are made great things happen."

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