

## Political science grad hopes to foster connections worldwide

April 25, 2025 9:00 AM Maria Clark  
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Ayanna Hill is graduating with a Bachelor of Arts in political science with a Concentration in international affairs and a Bachelor of Science in management.  
(Photo by Kenny Lass)

There's a big world that Ayanna Hill is ready to explore. And if she needs it, home will always be waiting.

"My mom was always telling me to leave Texas, that home would always be here," said Hill who was raised outside of Dallas. "I grew up wanting to explore other cultures and expand my worldview," she said.

Hill is graduating in May with a Bachelor of Arts in political science with a Concentration in international affairs and a Bachelor of Science in management. Inspired by her mom, Hill knew from a young age that she wanted to work overseas.

"I wanted to bridge my interest in politics with traveling," she said.

While doing some research during her first year of high school she learned about the work Foreign Service officers for the U.S. Department of State do abroad. Three years later she learned about the Charles B. Rangel Graduate Fellowship Program which is run through the U. S. Department of State. The fellowship awards up to \$42,000 a year for a two-year period to cover tuition, room and board, books and fees towards a two-year Master's degree.

Hill was awarded the fellowship this year and through it will be attending Johns Hopkins University School of International Service in the fall, where she will pursue a degree in international relations. At the end of her time in graduate school, she will work with the foreign service through the fellowship's 5-year service commitment.

"I am primarily interested in international development and the economic or management arm of the State Department," she said.

Hill applied to several universities for her undergraduate degree but was especially drawn to Tulane and New Orleans. Her parents had visited the city for their anniversary and her mother fell in love with the architecture and vintage charm of the city.

Hill credits the university and the Altman Program in International Studies and Business in particular with providing her the opportunities to pursue a dual degree and studies abroad. In her time at Tulane, Hill learned to speak Spanish at a nearly proficient level. She is also interested in learning to speak Portuguese.

During her junior year, Hill spent the fall semester in Cali, Colombia, and the spring semester in Madrid, Spain. Through the Carolyn Barber-Pierre Center for Intercultural Life, Hill learned about opportunities to spend the summer semesters overseas as well. Between her first and second years she went to Mexico where she studied finance and globalization. The following semester she went to the Dominican Republic through the Carolyn Barber-Pierre Center for Intercultural Life.

Hill is the first person in her family to travel abroad.

“I always thought it would be out of my means financially, but I was able to do it basically for free by getting a full ride two times to cover the expenses,” she said.

Now she is hoping to inspire her brother who is 10 years younger to do the same.

“I would love to go back to Colombia. I miss it so much. Really, anywhere in Latin America would be fine with me,” she said.