

Daniel Lewis

For Daniel Lewis, the decision to attend Oakland University was nothing short of life-changing. Along with top-notch educational opportunities, it opened a portal to new horizons, fresh perspectives, interesting people and cultures.

“While in high school, I was mostly around African American people, but once I came to Oakland University I was interested in learning about different races and cultures,” he recalls. “I always heard so much about racism and how people who look a certain way should not do certain things that I wanted to defy the odds.”

Daniel’s journey of discovery has been fueled by his experiences in OU programs — as a peer mentor in the Center for Multicultural Initiatives and as a mentor in the Department of Pre-College Programs. In these roles, Daniel is able to share his knowledge with students of diverse backgrounds. He says that like his own experience, many of these students entered college with little exposure to other cultures.

“For some of them, I am the first African-American person that they really had the chance to sit down and talk to,” Daniel explains. “Showing them that we are all people no matter what their skin color is very big when the scholars and I have our meetings.”

To combat stereotypes and promote good will, Daniel challenged the students to make friends with people of all races.

“It is one of my main priorities to continue to break down racial barriers,” he adds.

While serving as a mentor in the GEAR UP program, the health sciences major has been recognized for providing academic, social and cultural enrichment opportunities for pre-college students. Reginald McCloud, director of the Department of Pre-College Programs, has observed his efforts firsthand.

“Daniel has made outstanding contributions to the program, as well as demonstrated excellent leadership skills relative to the program mission — which is to help underrepresented students discover the potential of a college education,” McCloud says.

Among other activities, Daniel is active in intramural basketball, the Circle of Brotherhood and God’s Arsenal youth group.