Scholarship Proposal:

The year was 2011, and Ciriboya, a small town on the northern coast of Honduras established its first hospital. This marked a huge shift in the minds of many, as an entire community, came together to establish a holistic health center that provides care to its patients free of charge. In an interview with “Honduras Resiste,” Dr. Luther Castillo, founder of the hospital, stated: “Health care is a human right, not something to be bought and sold. It's not just about flesh and bone, but about well-being, with all the social, psychological and cultural elements that entails.”

The Garifuna descend from African, Carib and Arawak people. These three groups were brought together when a slave ship traveling from West Africa to the Americas crashed on the island of San Vicente, ensuring the freedom of the captive men. A wise man once told me that there is no growth in the comfort zone, and no comfort in the growth zone. Ciriboya, locally known by its Garifuna name, Mañali, is undoubtedly in the growth zone in terms of community development. Although this growth continues to be a slow and testing process, this hospital marks an important victory that has brought unprecedented momentum and hope to the Garifuna youth.

There was a span of 214 years between the arrival of the Garinagu in Honduras in 1797 and the establishment of the first Garifuna community hospital in the country. With a new generation of Garifuna youth pursuing education in public health, architecture, electrical and mechanical
engineering, agriculture, and many other fields, these young people are acquiring the capacity and skillset to solve the pressing issues of their community. However, those issues have not been clearly defined nor their potential solutions conceptualized.

My thesis will investigate the intersections between mapping and community organizing. I am particularly interested in developing a Geographic Information System (GIS) of and for the village of Mañali in order to spatially display relevant natural and human factors. In preparation for my thesis I will explore innovative models of youth involvement in the planning process. In the same vein as the inspiring ethnographic research of Javier Auyero and Débora Alejandra Swistun in their book: *Flammable: Environmental Suffering in an Argentine Shantytown*, I am interested in what might come out of viewing Mañali through the eyes of the youth.

I will provide 30 young people between ages of 7 and 25 with disposable cameras. Each person will be asked to take half of their photos of things they like about the village and, naturally, the other half of things they don’t like. I will also conduct video interviews with each willing participant. These responses will be classified into three age brackets: 7-11, 12-17, and 18-25. These interviews will then be transcribed and translated. Common themes in each age bracket will determine the natural and human data layers, which will define the scale and scope of the GIS.

Luagu lidise wéibugu wasandirei lihürü wangügü. This Garifuna proverb translates to: It is as we proceed on our journey that we feel the weight of our
burden. Although this journey in research will be long, it shies in comparison to the journeys and struggles of Garifuna people past and present. As a Garifuna-U.S. American-born man, the politics of ethical representation of these voices and stories will be a heavy burden, however, it too shies in comparison to the burdens that my ancestors triumphed over so that I can be in the position to conduct this research. I look forward to bridging my personal love for storytelling through videography and photography with the urban studies discipline and assetting a community in the process.