

The MEITE program equipped me with a toolkit that empowers me to be a critically-thinking entrepreneur in the education space. Before enrolling, through my work in college admissions and campus visit services, I developed a passion for college readiness programming geared to middle schoolers. However, to make an impact on a larger scale, I wanted more research-based education and opportunities to develop into an educational entrepreneur. The MEITE program exceeded those expectations—and was a catalyst for my current venture, Quest2College.

I was pushed out of my comfort zone, academically, in research-based courses like Learning Sciences and Learning Analytics. After receiving failing grades on my first assignments, my professors offered sound feedback—urging and motivating me to beef up my critical writing. Once I started to engage deeper with the content presented in assigned readings, I became proud of the research papers, presentations and digital tools that I was producing. Those same research papers, presentations and digital tools gave me confidence to seek opportunities, within the UNC-Chapel Hill network, to enter the educational entrepreneurship space and develop Quest2College.

A pleasantly surprising part of the MEITE program was exposure to serious opportunities to enter the educational entrepreneurship space. I expected educational entrepreneurs to visit our classes and speak about their ventures and give us tips on how to start our own ventures—and that *did* happen. However, what I did not expect was the amount of opportunities that exist to legitimately start a business—turning visions into realities. MEITE faculty and advisors encouraged me to pitch Quest2College to Launch Chapel Hill—an award-winning start-up accelerator. After I pitched my vision, the Launch Chapel Hill panel told me how impressed they were with not only my research-based presentation but the persuasive style of my pitch and aesthetically-pleasing pitch deck. This praise did not surprise me because I learned those skills in MEITE courses and the MEITE thesis project—and felt fully prepared to showcase my venture in front of any potential investors.

The MEITE program gave me confidence—through research-based education and exposure to educational entrepreneurship opportunities—to incorporate Quest2College into a non-profit organization. I now live in Chicago, Illinois and recently partnered with a game development company that will build the Quest2College platform that will hopefully be in middle school classrooms across America. I am a more business-savvy, bold and critically-thinking person because of the MEITE program—and much more capable of making a large-scale, sustainable social impact.

Daniel Dinkins

MEITE, Class of 2019