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Student crowdfunds £65k online to fund Harvard degree course

An inner-city student crowdfunded £65,000 to pay for his degree course at Harvard, one of the world's top five universities.

Isaiah Wellington Lynn, who was brought up in a lone parent family in east London, graduated this summer and has now been selected from 31,000 applicants to be one of just 140 interns on a prestigious Silicon Valley scheme aimed at creating tech entrepreneurs of the future.

He was forced to crowdfund the fees for the elite and highly-selective year-long Harvard visiting undergraduate programme after a charity scholarship fell through last summer when he was in the second year of his anthropology degree at University College London (UCL).

After an intensive four-month selection process to win the place at Harvard, he refused to accept defeat and set up a website, #StratfordtoHarvard, and YouTube channel. He raised the £65,000 in a month from 700 donors across the UK, USA, Spain, Canada, Jamaica and Uganda.

Having graduated from Harvard with a 3.9 out of 4 score – equivalent to all As - his ambition is to run a venture capital firm investing in “social impact” projects and a foundation supporting children from “overlooked” backgrounds similar to his own.

He has already raised \$10,000 business sponsorship to set up the foundation with a friend from Harvard called Redefining Boundaries Fellowships. It is aimed at helping “dynamic, committed and intelligent” young “black techies” into the industry. 12 young fellows have already been selected to benefit.

“My year at Harvard exceeded my expectations. More than anything it showed me what can be possible. There was a mindset at Harvard that if you have an idea, why not do it right now rather than rely on your future to let it happen,” said Wellington Lynn.

By Charles Hymas, adapted from *www.telegraph.co.uk*, July 2018