Phonathon Managers, Sa’De T. Black ’22 and Sovigne Gardner ’22 spoke to us about their impressions of Bryn Mawr today and gave us some tips they share with their staff of 15-20 student callers for closing gifts.

Sa’De T. Black ’22 began looking at women’s liberal arts colleges when she heard presidential candidate Hilary Clinton went to Wellesley College. She settled on Bryn Mawr not only for its walkability but also because Bryn Mawr’s pre-med program would not force her into a specific path. It is still her intention to go into the Life Sciences field and she will graduate next year with a Biology major.

Sovigne Gardner ’21 was looking for a women’s College where the community and classrooms are a majority of women and one that is full of traditions. Coming from life in St. Paul, Minnesota, it is also a plus that she experiences all four seasons. Sovigne planned to major in International Studies or Political Science; however, she fell in love with Linguistics and learning about the patterns in language and studying the sociolinguistics of languages in decline. In addition, she will graduate next year with a minor in Chinese.

Both have missed the lack of human contact this year and having in-person classes. However, Sa’De appreciates the willingness of professors to meet more remotely and finds them more accessible. Sovigne appreciates being in an environment where everyone is working towards their degree even though they socially distance when they have peer-to-peer discussions or eat together. She misses spontaneous meetings with classmates for lunch or just to explore campus and has found COVID prevents her from socializing with people outside of her social circle. They have both found ways to have fun and relieve stress this year. Sa’De likes to spend one-on-one time with friends watching Netflix and Sovigne has joined a Hip-hop dance group and does tablet weaving.

Both Phonathon Managers are also busy with other campus responsibilities. In addition to being a part of a Hip-hop dance group, Sovigne volunteers with VITA (Volunteer Income Tax Assistance) and is also a rower. Early mornings workouts at the gym take up much of her time and require social distancing. Sa’De works part-time on CARLA (Coalition for Anti-Racist Literacy at Bryn Mawr College), Bryn Mawr’s Collective designed to hold open conversations about race and antiracism on campus and is a DEI consultant for the President’s Office. She is also a tour guide and tells prospective students that Bryn Mawr’s community is open, welcome, and kind.

Phonathon puts Sa’De and Sovigne in touch with plenty of alumnæ/i who are interested in what is happening on campus, checking up on favorite faculty members and hearing about how things have changed. Speaking with alumnæ/i taught Sa’De that rather than what society tells you to do, Bryn Mawr is about what you want to do. It helps you become a more well-rounded person. Sovigne’s conversations with alumnæ/i proves a Bryn Mawr education gives you the ability to do anything. One of her favorite conversations includes a Psychology major who is currently a TSA officer and her tenacity to pursue a path not in her degree. One of Sa’De’s favorite conversations included a parent who asked her to connect with her daughter. She did and now they are good friends.
Both managers advise their team to not be afraid to make the ask to those they call and connect with. Sovigne finds that people appreciate when you ask for a specific amount. She says you might be surprised. People who take their call care about helping students and helping to sustain Bryn Mawr. Sa’De advises that people often tell you what they can afford to give. And the worst thing they can do is say no.