

November 12, 2025



Dear Reader,

My name is Mingjia. I'm a senior at Vassar College majoring in Sociology with a minor in Asian American Studies. I've really enjoyed building community on campus through my work with the ALANA Cultural Center, the UJIMA artists' collective and the Brain and Body Coalition, a mental health advocacy nonprofit. I've even learned how to juggle fire sticks as part of the Barefoot Fireflies circus troupe!

I'm also a peer mentor to younger first-gen students who are navigating the same challenges I've faced. Every day, I see their determination as they overcome barriers rooted in racism, classism, and inequity. **First-generation students are courageous.** We are creating new stories for ourselves, our families, and the generations to come. This work has inspired me to pursue a career in social work so I can continue helping others after I graduate.



***“Every first-gen student is a tree that provides new opportunities for their children and generations beyond, even amidst the struggles that aim to prevent us from going forward.”***

This summer, I spoke at a Vassar alumni event in Chicago about the growing obstacles first-gen college students face, including cuts to financial aid and programs that support low-income students. These challenges have only gotten worse, and many of us are also worried about our families' safety at home. This is not the time to be silent or sit on the sidelines. **CBO Scholars need your support now more than ever.**

***“During this time of rampant abuse of human rights, uplifting student voices is even more urgent. Students need the support provided by CBO. They need people to show up for them and remind them that they matter, because they do.”***

Thank you for being part of my college journey. **I hope you will invest in Scholars like me by making a gift to CBO today.** Your generosity will ensure we have the resources and encouragement we need to learn how to make the world a better place and lead change in our communities.

With gratitude,  
**Mingjia**

A handwritten signature of Mingjia in black ink.

CBO Scholar, Vassar College '25

**PS I hope you enjoy my sketches!**



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