Dear Members of Executive Women International,

Words cannot begin to express the gratitude I feel composing this letter. Several months ago, I had the pleasure of speaking in front of your chapter and revealing to the outstanding women who surrounded me the opportunities and obstacles that led me to where I am today. Not only did this experience allow me to reflect upon myself before I left for Harvard, but it aided me as I laid the foundation from which I would continue to grow moving forward. In the few months I've been a member of my school's community, I can confirm that my personal and professional growth here is bringing me closer to my aspirations.

As a result of my continued interest in biomedical engineering, I placed a life science and another STEM oriented course in my schedule for the fall semester. Whether garnering a more in-depth understanding of Le Chatelier's principle or analyzing the evolutionary qualities that separate humans from other primates, these classes served as a constant reminder that there is always more to learn. Every lecture either opened my eyes further to a concept I thought I already understood or introduced me to an entirely new subject.

Outside of my biological and chemical studies, I found myself in an expository writing course. Quite the gem of a class, my particular section focused on con artists and their depiction in literature and the media. Out of all of the scams and pyramid schemes covered in the course, I was especially intrigued by the events of the 2017 Fyre Festival catastrophe. A man by the name of Billy McFarland along with rapper Ja Rul were responsible for hosting one of the most disastrous concerts in American history, scamming various parties of more than $27 million. As much as I disagree with the actions of McFarland, JaRul, and the other con artists we studied in the course, I found their common ambition and ability to think on their feet an impressive quality to possess (if only it were used for morally sound purposes).

The final course I participated in this semester was my math class. Aside from solidifying my knowledge of derivatives and integrals, the class was a joy as the Math Question Center allowed me to befriend my peers across different math sections. It soon became a ritual for a group of us to spend time in the freshman dining hall following our Problem Set meet-ups. For roughly an hour, we'd sit and converse about our college experiences thus far, filling the air with new inside jokes and eventually pulling ourselves from the table when we were the last students in the space. It was moments like these that best aligned with the college experience I dreamed of: not only would I thrive in the classroom, but also meet individuals who were academically driven and eager to form lasting friendships. Throughout this past semester, I formed such bonds through my classes, Harvard Society for Black Scientists and Engineers, Association of Black Harvard Women, the hip-hop dance group, "Expressions", Women's Club Wrestling, and even by sitting at different tables during meals. In just the first semester of my Harvard experience, it's the community I've found on campus that has made this institution feel like home. Whether having a professor share their story or a member of my entryway sending a friendly smile my way, I cannot emphasize enough how much I've loved getting to know the people of Harvard University. In the end, all of this is to say thank you.

Thank you again for granting me this opportunity. Thank you for making it possible for me to attend such an incredible university. Thank you for the memories I have formed thus far and for all of those to come.

Sincerely,
Mya Johnson