

## Background/History

The Tuskegee Airmen overcame many obstacles to become the first African-American military aviators in the United States Armed Forces<sup>\*</sup>. Indeed, they are often credited with fighting two wars simultaneously: one against United States military enemies during World War II, the other against prejudice and racism.

After the war, many of the Tuskegee Airmen went on to distinguished careers in the military, civil service, engineering, business, aerospace, and other diverse fields. Later, they came together to incorporate Tuskegee Airmen Inc., a network of 57 service chapters in 34 states. They also used their personal resources to establish a scholarship fund for low-income, high-potential students entering college. In particular, the Tuskegee Airmen hoped their support would make careers in aviation, aerospace, and what has come to be known as STEM<sup>†</sup> more accessible to underrepresented groups, including African Americans.

Since 1978, the Tuskegee Airmen have granted more than 1,400 scholarships totaling nearly \$2 million to financially and academically deserving high school students who demonstrate the courage and commitment to overcome barriers.

### Evolution of [redacted; hereafter known as “the Organization”]

1978–Tuskegee Airmen found Tuskegee Airmen Inc., a network of 57 service chapters, and commit to offering 40 scholarships of \$1,500 annually to low-income, high-potential students entering college. Mindful of their own difficult experiences and the opportunities they were denied because of ideas about race, the Tuskegee Airmen pledge to award scholarships without regard to race or ethnicity.

2004–the Organization is established as a 501(c)(3) organization separate from Tuskegee Airmen Inc.; a \$[redacted] investment fund ensures continuation of the original scholarship program

2015–the Organization hires an executive director, its first and only paid staff member; over the next two years the Organization begins using professional communication and fundraising tools and adds four [redacted] scholarships (one \$5,000 scholarship funded by [redacted] and two \$2,500 scholarships funded by [redacted])

2019–the Organization seeks to expand organizational capacity and increase the size of individual scholarships to better support students; with a seed contribution of \$25,000, the Organization launches a campaign to raise funds for a new, perpetual named scholarship

<sup>\*</sup>The name “Tuskegee Airmen” applies to the World War II military pilots of the 332<sup>nd</sup> Fighter Group and the 477<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Group as well as the navigators, bombardiers, mechanics, instructors, crew chiefs, nurses, cooks, and other support personnel in those units.

<sup>†</sup>STEM refers to science, technology, engineering, and math

## Mission and Objectives

The Organization's mission is to increase college entrance rates among financially and academically deserving students who demonstrate the courage and commitment to overcome barriers. The Organization is particularly interested in students pursuing aviation and aerospace careers.

Among the most persistent barriers in American society are the negative and long-lasting effects of race-based laws, policies, and social practices. These barriers have had a particularly profound impact in the STEM professions. For example:

- African-American and Latinx workers make up only 16% of the advanced manufacturing workforce, 15% of the computing workforce, and 12% of the engineering workforce, rates that have remained essentially flat for more than a decade, according to the 2015 U.S. News/Raytheon STEM Index<sup>1</sup>.
- In 2015, according to the National Center for Education Statistics, 3,944 bachelor's degrees were awarded in aerospace engineering; of those, only 113 (less than 3%) were earned by African Americans<sup>2</sup>.
- African Americans and Latinxs make up a tiny share of the technology workforce at high-tech companies with outsize social, political, and economic influence. In their annual diversity reports, Facebook, Google, and Apple claim between 1.5% and 6% African-American tech workers, and between 3.5% and 8% Latinx workers<sup>3</sup>.

Other kinds of barriers prevent equitable access by high-potential students to higher education in STEM fields and, later, to careers in those fields. The Organization aims to help remove the financial barrier to higher education.

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<sup>1</sup> Neuhauser, Alan and Cook, Lindsey. "2016 U.S. News/Raytheon STEM Index Show Uptick in Hiring, Education." The website of *U.S. News*. May 17, 2016, 2019. <https://www.usnews.com/news/articles/2016-05-17/the-new-stem-index-2016>

<sup>2</sup> Merner, Laura and Tyler, John. "African-American Participation Among Bachelors in the Physical Sciences and Engineering; Results from the 2005 to 2015 Data of the National Center for Education Statistics." The website of the American Institute of Physics. Accessed August 26, 2016. <https://www.aip.org/statistics/reports/african-american-participation-among-bachelors-physical-sciences>

<sup>3</sup> Facebook (<https://diversity.fb.com/read-report>), Google (<https://diversity.google/annual-report>), and Apple (<https://www.apple.com/diversity>)

## Measurable Outcomes

Before hiring its first staff person, the Organization was not able to track scholarship recipients or gather data on outcomes. However, the Organization has now made it a priority to track students post-award and, with the assistance of student volunteers, it has located and added 435 past scholarship recipients to its database. They include young people such as [redacted], a 2016 graduate of Tuskegee University who now works for Rockwell Collins as a systems engineer, and [redacted], who graduated from Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University in 2014 and now works as a flight coordinator for United Technologies in Annapolis, Maryland.

The Organization will continue to develop its capacity to measure outcomes as it seeks to increase the size of scholarship awards and explores additional ways to support scholarship recipients academically and professionally.

## Funding Request

Since 2004 the all-volunteer board of the Organization has been a capable steward of the funds raised by the original Tuskegee Airmen, maintaining the foundation's \$[redacted] endowment while ensuring that scholarships are dispersed each year to academically and financially deserving students. In 2015, the board recognized the need for professional staff and hired an executive director.

However, additional professional and financial support is needed to continue the legacy of the Tuskegee Airmen.

- Organization-generated scholarships have not been increased since the program began in 1978, meaning that today's financially needy recipients must often seek multiple other sources of support just to pay for the first of what is typically four or more years of post-secondary education. **Scholarship awards must be increased to meet today's cost of a college education.**
- The Organization board is interested in using its connections to create mentoring and internship opportunities to help students complete their studies and enter their chosen profession. **Resources are needed to explore and implement ideas for additional support of scholarship recipients.**
- The tasks associated with operating the Organization as a modern professional organization include executive-level administration and board management, fundraising, communications and event management, and financial and clerical administration. One FTE (the current executive director) cannot realistically execute all of those tasks.

A major gifts officer (consultant) with demonstrated success identifying, stewarding, and soliciting corporate sponsorships and gifts from high-net worth individuals would be

able to help the Organization protect its endowment; find support for new projects such as mentoring; complete the campaign for a \$25,000 named scholarship; and increase the size of scholarship awards. **A major gifts officer (consultant) is needed to help the Organization continue fulfilling the legacy of the Tuskegee Airmen, including offering financially meaningful scholarships and other kinds of academic and professional support.**