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MAVERICK ALUMNI AWARD \$2,500 SCHOLARSHIPS TO DESERVING STUDENTS

The Bridging The Gap Scholarship Recipients Have Been Selected

ARLINGTON, TX, November 25, 2022: Maverick Alumni, Ekong Patrick Ekong '11 and Michael Coleman '14, joined forces to give back to incoming students at the University of Texas at Arlington. Through their organizations, Ekonometrix & Crowned Scholars, the proud alumni awarded two \$2,500 scholarships to first year, UTA Mavericks.

The Bridging The Gap Scholarship was open to all incoming Mavericks of color and challenged each applicant to answer the question, "How will you utilize your collegiate experience and studies to add value to your respective field of study, fill a gap, or push society forward in an innovative way?" With an application period of August 8th through September 2nd the fellow alumni knew that they had to act quickly and get creative with getting the word out about the scholarships. They used social media and connections with on campus organizations to notify students about the opportunity and were blown away by their participation. *"The amount of interest and applications we received made one thing clear to me - this is a need! I love that we're able to give back to the next generation of leaders, and look forward to continuing to empower Mavericks of color,"* stated Michael.

As they began the process of scoring the essays, the duo knew that it wouldn't be an easy task. Incoming Mavericks of all majors and backgrounds wrote about how they would use their education from the University of Texas at Arlington to help their families and give back to their communities. Each essay was scored on how well the applicant answered the prompt, how creative or innovative their gap intervention was and how well their essay was written overall. In the end, incoming transfer student Emani Babin and graduate student Jaelyn Jamal Easley stood out amongst the crowd and were awarded the inaugural scholarships. When asked why they decided to create the scholarship, Ekong stated, *"It's always been a dream of mine to give back to the campus. UTA played a foundational role in me becoming the man I am today, and I wanted to provide that opportunity for other mavericks of color."*

PREPARED BY

Dontae Robison
Ekonometrix | Public Relations Strategist
dontae@ekonometrix.com