

## **Dear Representatives of the Murray Slater Foundation,**

I am writing to express my heartfelt gratitude for selecting me as the recipient of the prestigious Murray Slater Foundation Scholarship. This life-changing opportunity fills me with excitement, and I am deeply honored by the trust you have placed in me.

Allow me to share a brief background about myself and my journey in engineering. In the expansive field of mechanical engineering, I discovered my true passion during my capstone project as an undergraduate at Ashesi University in Ghana. Specifically, I found fulfillment in manufacturing and product design. One of my most impactful projects was the design and testing of an affordable wheel-driven crop sprayer. Inspired by my experiences applying agrochemicals in my mother's vegetable garden using a bucket and a broom, I developed this innovative solution. The work was published under IEEE, and the global appreciation it received highlighted its potential impact on small-scale farmers.

Post-graduation, I joined Fligh Technologies, a startup focused on manufacturing unmanned aerial vehicles for delivering medical supplies to remote parts of Zimbabwe. Leading the design team at Fligh Tech, I took our concept from ideation to a viable solution currently in the prototyping phase. I deeply resonate with Fligh Tech's ambition to enhance medical supply delivery, especially in the face of failing health system and the increasing loss of lives due to shortages in remote institutions. These projects have given me a profound understanding of pressing community problems and how I can leverage my engineering skills to contribute to sustainable communities.

My decision to join the MEng program at UC Berkeley was driven by the remarkable success stories of its alumni. Reading about the challenges they faced and the significant impact they made after completing the rigorous master's program underscored the importance of upgrading my skillset as a sustainable product engineer. As I reflect on my experiences thus far, I recognize a significant gap that requires institutional guidance to become a competent product engineer. The MEng program, known for its cutting-edge innovation, offers a unique blend of engineering, managerial, and leadership training. I am confident that it will equip me with a deep understanding of product design fundamentals, the ability to lead teams effectively, and the skills necessary to deliver practical solutions.

My aspiration is to be an impactful contributor to sustainable engineering and intelligent manufacturing. Whether through enhancing existing systems or pioneering new approaches, I am committed to making a tangible difference. Projects that address pressing challenges—such as the enhanced medical supply delivery explored by startups like Fligh Technologies—fuel my determination to amass the skillset needed for sustainable solutions, particularly in Zimbabwe and across Africa. Beyond technical growth, I envision fostering a collaborative environment that accelerates Africa toward achieving sustainable communities—one engineering project at a time.

The support from the Murray Slater Foundation has allowed me to realize my dream of sustainable engineering. It not only provides financial assistance on a global stage but also validates that my aspirations matter. Indeed, engineering can drive the world toward sustainable communities.

Once again, thank you for this incredible opportunity to be part of the changemakers. I eagerly anticipate learning from and contributing to the diverse community of the MEng program as we collectively sharpen our skills in preparation for the greater challenges ahead.

Sincerely,

Tatenda Cecil Mashongedza