

7x24 Exchange International Central Virginia Scholarship

October 28, 2020

7x24 Exchange Intl. Central Va. Chapter
Attn: Dave Mulholland
P.O. Box 6052
Glen Allen, VA 23058-6052

Dear Dave,

On behalf of the students and faculty of the VCU College of Engineering, thank you for the generous support you have provided to the 7x24 Exchange International Central Virginia Chapter Scholarship. I am pleased to share these scholar profiles with you.

I would like to share the following words from Dean Boyan found in the College's recent annual review.

It is impossible to reflect upon 2020 without considering the impact of the novel coronavirus that changed our world. Even now, we're not entirely sure how COVID-19 will impact us long-term. What we do know is that engineers solve problems and this one is no different. It's been a year of progress for VCU Engineering as we've advanced in research, in industry partnerships and in unexpected ways. I hope it's been a similar year for you.

Thank you again for your generous gift towards the future of our students.

Sincerely,



Philip O'Connor
Executive Director
College of Engineering Foundation





7x24 Exchange International Central Virginia Scholarship



Name

Roland Kusi

Hometown

Lorton, Va.

Ghana, West Africa

Expected graduation

2023

Major

Biomedical Engineering

About me

I grew up in a single-parent household and I am a first-generation college student. I am working as hard as I can to help my mom, a Certified Nurse Assistant, take care of a household of six and eventually retire.

My hard-working attitude is a major trait that has distinguished me from most of the people I grew up with. My leadership roles and academic successes are a result of my extreme dedication and diligence to everything I set my mind to.

Choosing VCU was an easy decision for me because of its diverse environment. I am involved with several campus organizations: Developing Men of Color (DMC), The National Society of Black Engineers (NSBE), and VCU LEAD, a living-learning program to develop leadership skills.

I have had interest in data centers ever since I took a cybersecurity class in high school. The biomechanics and instrumentation fields of biomedical engineering are my top areas of interest.

My future plans and goals

My top two goals are to grow my leadership skills and to pursue a career in biomedical engineering. My ultimate goal as a biomedical engineer is to help establish a business in Ghana to help the youth there who have interest in biomedical engineering but lack the resources to pursue studies.

My immediate goal is to apply for internships that will keep me connected to industry. My leadership skills help me excel at teamwork and having opportunities to meet like-minded individuals who want to accomplish great things through engineering will be something special.

Thank you

I am highly honored to have been selected for this 7x24 Scholarship Award. It shows that my hard work at school is paying off, and I will reap the benefits of my efforts if I persist. I want to inspire my siblings with how education can pave way for people like us if we set our minds to higher goals in life. This award gives me motivation to chase my dreams so I may put myself in a position to impact the lives of those around me in a positive way.



7x24 Exchange International Central Virginia Scholarship



Name

Aleksandr Olek

Hometown

Rochester, N.Y.
Richmond, Va.

Expected graduation

2021

Major

Computer Science

Concentration

Data Science

About me

I have been bouncing around Virginia ever since I joined the Navy in 2005. I hold an Associate's degree in electrical engineering from Germanna Community College in Fredericksburg, VA. I volunteer with the College of Engineering Career Services office as a Career Ambassador. This has been a great opportunity which allows me to leverage my work history to help my fellow students with resume or interview prep and provide career guidance. It also allows me to meet, connect, and network with local employers. I also try to stay involved with the Community Outreach programs by participating in various STEM nights/activities at local schools.

Before the pandemic began, I worked as a foreman at the College of Engineering Maker Garage doing metal working, wood working, and other design and manufacturing projects. I utilized that experience to get a job as a factory intern at Super Radiator Coils in the summer of 2019. They are a local company making heat exchangers, and they were quite impressed that as an intern I could step in a mill operator with little to no additional training. In the summer of 2020 I worked an IT Implementation intern with IT4Causes. They are a great non-profit organization which helps other local non-profit organization with their IT needs. It was a challenging and incredibly rewarding experience.

My future plans and goals

I may eventually pursue a Master's degree, but I first started taking classes towards this degree in 2014, so it feels like I have been in school forever. I may be done with school, but certainly not with learning. I plan on using my degree to help me find a great job in the RVA community as a Data Scientist/Analyst/Engineer. I believe that in tech you can work just about anywhere, so I know that for me I would prefer to work for a company doing a job that I believe in.

Thank you

I am incredibly grateful for this opportunity. For the majority of my academic career I was either working full time and going to school part time or going to school full time and working two part time jobs. My wife was unable to work for the early part of the pandemic and that has created a lot of financial uncertainty for us. This award will go a long way towards securing our financial future and I am incredibly honored to have been considered for this opportunity.