

Nelson Mandela once said:

“There is no passion to be found playing small- in settling for a life that is less than the one you are capable of”

#### BEGINNING-

For me, this quote played a huge role in the creation of the F.E. Foundation, I was just 18 years old, sitting in my room on a hot summer day, thinking about how overwhelming the college and scholarship process had been for me during my senior year of high school. After receiving over \$5 million in scholarship offers and over 120 college acceptances, I thought to myself “If i can do this, why cant i help others do the same?” “What if I could make this easier for other students- what if I could help guide them to opportunities they didn't even know existed? But with that came fear- what if it didn't work? What if no one believed in what I was building, I knew I had nothing to lose by trying.

#### MIDDLE-

When I first established the F.E. Foundation in July of 2023, I didn't have a team, or even a clear plan. All I had was this huge idea and the belief that I could make a difference. I remember spending late nights creating scholarship application forms and brainstorming ways to help students. I remember feeling so small compared to the size of my dream. But I reminded myself why I was doing it: to give students the tools and confidence to chase their dreams just as I did. The F.E. Foundation isn't just an organization, it's a part of who I am. It's my way of saying “I understand the challenges you face, and I want to help make that journey easier.” I realized that stepping into the unknown is what truly led to growth and the only way to truly fail is to not take a step at all.

#### END-

When I look back at my 18 year old self with a bold vision, I realized how important it was to take that leap of faith. The F.E. Foundation taught me that fear doesn't mean stop- it means go. It means you're stepping into things bigger than yourself. I've learned that it's okay to not have everything figured out in the beginning, but what matters is taking that first step. The F.E. Foundation has not only helped others chase their dreams, but it's shown me the power of persistence and believing in my own potential. If I could leave you with a few pieces of advice, it would be this: first, don't wait until you feel “ready”- because you'll truly never feel ready. Start where you are with what you have and trust that you'll figure things out along the way and finally remember that the size of your dream doesn't define its worth, your willingness to take action does.