

August 24, 2020

Dear Scholarship Committee Members,

It is with great enthusiasm I write to nominate Ms. Sarina Naik for the Foundation for the Advancement of Health Education's (FAHE) Dr. Mary K. Beyrer Graduate Student Scholarship. In alignment with the award criteria, Sarina is an outstanding scholar who is truly dedicated to advancing the field of health education. Below I will briefly outline her potential and some of the outstanding characteristics that make her a deserving applicant for this award.

In the spring semester of 2019, I first met and served as Sarina's professor for *Health Program Evaluation*, where I witnessed her enthusiasm for learning, determination, and ability to produce high quality work. *Health Program Evaluation* is a highly intensive course that challenges students to think critically, conduct research, and write professionally in order to determine the impact of a chosen health education program. After evaluating the program as a team, students must suggest improvements and defend their recommendations through an interactive oral presentation. Sarina's team created a thorough evaluation proposal while providing appropriate recommendations for their school-based nutrition education program. During their presentation, Sarina used her creativity and enthusiasm to create a presentation that was not only informative, but also unique, professional, and highly engaging.

Before finishing her undergraduate degree, Sarina completed her community health internship with Entreña in the Dominican Republic. She was responsible for conducting needs assessments, implementing health education programming, and working in sexuality and reproductive care primarily for women and youth. She also participated in nearly 60 hours of training to develop her Spanish speaking skills, which provided a unique opportunity to enhance her cultural competency and ability to communicate with diverse populations.

In August 2019, Sarina began the Health Education master's degree program at Texas A&M University. While earning her degree, Sarina has selected the option of receiving an all-grade (K-12) teaching certification in health education. She chose this path, because she is committed to teaching and creating an inclusive environment where all students can learn and thrive. Throughout the program, Sarina has completed coursework in pedagogy, curriculum design, and educational leadership. She has learned how to become an effective educator who makes learning interactive, meaningful, and fun!

As part of her graduate studies, Sarina has assisted with several undergraduate courses focused on preparing the next generation of school health leaders. In my course, *Teaching School in a Modern Society*, Sarina oversaw and evaluated student learning by assisting students in creating their professional teaching philosophies, lesson plans, and electronic portfolios. In another course with Dr. Beth McNeill, *School Health*, Sarina learned the importance of advocacy and promoted mindfulness as a positive coping strategy for school-aged youth. Together, these experiences have allowed Sarina to sharpen her professional skillset and grow as an emerging health education professional.

In our school health program, students are required to complete 45+ hours of self-directed field experiences outside of required coursework. I admire Sarina's willingness to volunteer in local schools and would expect her time and experiences as a mentor, coordinator, and volunteer will put her in an advantageous position as a future health

educator. Additionally, she has assisted me with the *PAWS for Reading* program, which provides animal-assisted literacy education to elementary students in Bryan, Texas. The project is in collaboration with the local animal shelter, providing a unique opportunity for elementary students to practice reading aloud to animals in need. In this project, Sarina was responsible for implementing program activities, organizing service projects, and serving as a mentor to participants.

Outside of coursework, Sarina has remained consistently involved as a leader in multiple student organizations across campus. She has been responsible for managing budgets, planning events, and coordinating service activities. Through these experiences, it is evident she is committed to giving back to the community, cultivating strong relationships, and promoting the health and well-being of others – all of which are important characteristics of health education professionals.

Sarina has matured personally, professionally, and academically during her tenure at Texas A&M University and has become more polished and confident in her abilities to teach, research, serve, and advocate on behalf of others. Perhaps what impresses me most about Sarina is her unwavering work ethic, dependability, positive attitude, and passion for health education. Honestly, I can ask Sarina to take on any task and it is always completed timely and professionally. Sarina is truly one of those students who will leave a long-lasting impression on me; she is an impressive, highly qualified applicant who is truly deserving of this scholarship. If you inquire any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me by phone at (979) 862-4428 or via email at meagan.shiple@tam.u.edu. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'MS', with a small red circular stamp to the left.

Meagan Shipley, PhD, CHES