

Dear Scholarship Committee Members,

Please accept this application for the Foundation for the Advancement of Health Education's (FAHE) Delbert Oberteuffer Scholarship. Currently, I am pursuing a PhD in Health Education while serving as a Graduate Teaching Assistant and Vice President for the Eta Sigma Gamma (ESG) Alpha Pi chapter at Texas A&M University (TAMU). In these roles, I strive to uphold the field's professional standards, ethics, and competencies.

Previous or Current Activities Related to Health Education/Promotion

My academic career has centered around fostering environments in which all individuals can learn and thrive. My undergraduate studies focused on Community Health, equipping me with diverse methods for planning, implementing, and evaluating Health Education programs. My graduate studies have centered around school and adolescent health, pedagogy, and teacher preparation. I am currently a Graduate Teaching Assistant (GTA) under the supervision of Dr. Beth McNeill. This role has offered a variety of experiences and learning opportunities to enhance my skills as a future educational scholar. Additionally, I have served as a Graduate Research Assistant under Dr. Kelly Wilson where I have been involved in several projects working with youth populations. On these projects I served as a liaison between TAMU, adolescent pregnancy prevention programs, and federal funding agencies. Additionally, I have engaged in several research projects, with our Health Education faculty focused on adolescent and youth Health Education. I have reviewed sexuality education curriculum, dating violence curriculum, created unique lesson plans, and implemented curricula for a variety of individuals.

Professional Goals in Health Education and Promotion

Three professional goals I am working towards include gaining more experience in the areas of research and writing, solidifying my professional identity, and emerging as a competitive Health Education professional upon graduation. My first goal centers around gaining more experience and technical skills regarding research and writing. The academic training thus far has prepared me in pedagogy, methodology, and program evaluation; however, I intend to build upon my previous training to increase my skillset in research and disseminating findings. My second goal focuses on solidifying my professional identity to maximize my knowledge within specific research areas. While I am interested in several topics, I am most passionate about adolescent and school health as well as training pre-service teachers. My third goal concentrates on emerging as a competitive professional with the goal of becoming a professor. My academic and professional training have encouraged me to grow as a student, but now I plan to expand on these experiences to reach my goals as an academician.

Potential for Advancing the Health of Children and Youth

As a 4th year doctoral student, I am in the process of completing my dissertation. The purpose of my dissertation is to understand identity salience and its relationship with sexuality educators' self-efficacy. In order to improve educators' self-efficacy when delivering sexuality education, I am looking beyond skills-based training and incorporating factors shaping identity salience. Going beyond skills-based training is important because salience affects self-efficacy. Despite receiving substantial amounts of skills-based training needed to implement sexuality education content, sexuality educators are reporting low self-efficacy. These low levels raise concern because educator's self-efficacy plays an important role in student outcomes. I hope,

therefore, my dissertation will contribute to advance the health of children and youth in the U.S. and beyond in two specific ways: 1) develop a conceptual frame accounting for identity salience and its role in enhancing self-efficacy among sexuality educators, and 2) initiate a critical conversation in the field of sexuality education regarding programmatic efforts to better prepare professional sexuality educators.

In addition to research efforts, my commitment to service has allowed me to explore different perspectives surrounding the critical role educators and families play in students' lives. I am a firm believer in service especially in our schools and local communities. I am involved in multiple community based partnerships which focus on the health and wellbeing of children and youth. These collaborations include 1.) Physical Activity in Shelters: PAWS for Reading program which is dedicated to increasing literacy and physical activity patterns among low-socioeconomic elementary students and 2.) the Read by 3rd program, a national initiative where we plan and implement lessons to parents and guardians of elementary school children on topics including nutrition, physical activity, and promoting learning in the home. I believe my dedication to service reflect my commitment to advancing the overall health of children and youth.

I hope to contribute to the field by increasing the quality of pre-professional programs through training the next generation of health educators. I believe it is critical to equip all individuals with the knowledge, skills, and resources needed to make informed health decisions. I sincerely thank FAHE for taking time to invest in the future of Health Education by supporting its undergraduate and graduate students. It is an honor to apply for an award which strives to elevate the field of Health Education through professional development, advocacy, and outreach. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

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