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Dear Members of the Selection Committee,

My name is Jala Lockhart and I am a 2nd year Health Education and Promotion Ph.D. student at The University of Alabama. It is hard to believe that I have completed almost half of the program and that it is time to start thinking about what lies ahead.

The field of health education has given so much to me and I have appreciated my time learning and practicing my knowledge. Returning to school to complete my doctorate has been a phenomenal experience that I will forever be grateful for. In my first year, I presented abstracts at national and international conferences (3) as well as contributed to two grant funded research projects as a data collector and manager. Notably, I created a professional instagram page where I use the platform to advocate for and educate people on how to engage in their physical health by being active, eating healthfully, but also being mindful of their mental health. During my first year I also had the pleasure of serving as an abstract reviewer for our undergraduate research conference and served as co-chair of the fundraising committee for my Eta Sigma Gamma chapter. These experiences acted as catalysts for my second year as I am now the treasurer of my ESG chapter along with the responsibilities of co-chairing for the professional development and fundraising committees.

Professionally, I am a member of the American Public Health Association (APHA), Society for Public Health Education (SOPHE), Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics (AND), and the American Association for Cancer Education (AACE). I have attended all of the organization's conferences and most recently, I served on the fundraising committee for AACE and was granted the opportunity to plan and implement a graduate student forum during the conference. One bright spot about returning to school during the pandemic was the ability to work from home and attend virtual webinars. So far in 2021, I have been able to attend over twenty webinars ranging in topics from COVID-19 to health equity. My cohort mates and I have also hosted a webinar through SOPHE where we re-presented our 1st place winning health campaign, #ProtectPickens.

Of late, my research focus has shifted to health education in the area of oncology. I have taken a strong interest in how the psychosocial and physical health behaviors of cancer survivors impact their quality of life and plan to use my dissertation to examine such. It is my career goal to be a director of an academic cancer center so that I can prioritize patient centered care and health

equity through a collaborative approach. I would use this position to advocate for integrative oncology, as it is known that considering the whole patient can lead to better health outcomes. As I think about what lies ahead and how I will contribute to the field of health education, I want to be known as the practitioner who was able to move the needle when it comes to health education in the prevention and control of cancer.

In closing, being awarded the Dr. Mary K. Beyrer Graduate Scholarship would mean so much to me as it would cover the remaining expenses for my last year of school. Although I hold an assistantship through the University, expenses such as books, parking, and course fees are not covered and cost me \$1,035 out of pocket this year. To cover these fees I often work on research projects or teach during the summer months and if granted this award, I could use the upcoming summer to focus on writing my dissertation. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Jala Lockhart