



EMORY  
ROLLINS  
SCHOOL OF  
PUBLIC  
HEALTH

Department of Behavioral, Social, and Health Education Sciences

October 28<sup>th</sup>, 2021

Foundation for the Advancement of Public Health  
Dr. Delbert Oberteuffer Scholarship Committee

To Whom It May Concern:

It is my pleasure to provide the strongest possible letter in support of Marcia Ash's application for the Dr. Delbert Oberteuffer Scholarship through the Foundation for the Advancement of Health Education. Beginning in 2019, I have served as Marcia's doctoral faculty advisor in the Department of Behavioral, Social, and Health Education Sciences at Emory University's Rollins School of Public Health. Throughout this period, Marcia has been an exceptional PhD student, and **I can confirm she has successfully completed 66 credit hours of doctoral coursework with a perfect 4.00 GPA.** As a PhD student, Marcia has cultivated an extremely strong set of qualitative and quantitative skills, teaching experience, and unique research perspective. I am inspired by her intellectual curiosity, commitment to improving the health of children and youth through thoughtful inquiry and rigorous research, and ability to work collaboratively with diverse academic and community partners to pursue her research questions and interests. I have no doubt that Marcia will ultimately become a leader within the field of health promotion.

As part of her PhD studies, Marcia has worked as a PhD graduate research assistant on numerous projects in the THRIVE Research Lab, which I lead. During her first year in the program, Marcia began assisting with our Link for Equity project, a cluster randomized control trial testing a two-tier school-based trauma-informed care and cultural humility intervention to reduce violence and racial trauma in schools. As we expanded our aims to include qualitative assessments related to implementation processes and outcomes, Marcia with her longstanding interest in implementation science quickly jumped-in to lead this effort. Marcia designed the corresponding interview guide and all other research materials, supervised MPH students assisting with data collection, and lead the analysis. I was so impressed by Marcia's initiative and the way she led this project including spearheading dissemination efforts such as presenting the findings this December at the 15<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference for Implementation & Dissemination Research.

This is just one example of the many projects that Marcia has worked on to advance the health of children and youth. She has presented at the Society for Behavioral Medicine Annual Meeting and published in *Translation Behavioral Medicine* on her work to understand predictors of medical mistrust among youth of color during the COVID-19 pandemic. She is currently a

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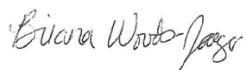
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research assistant on one of my projects examining the impact of economic policies on family and youth violence outcomes; and Marcia also serves as our project coordinator on a community-engaged pilot study to develop culturally-responsive strategies that promote mental health among pregnant, African American women. Across each of these projects, Marcia brings not only an incredibly strong set of research skills but also a commitment to health equity and improving the health of children and youth. At this early stage, Marcia has already made significant research contributions; in total, she has authored six peer-reviewed articles (with three additional papers currently under review) and 22 peer-reviewed presentations.

I am excited by the direction Marcia is planning to take for her dissertation where she plans to evaluate patient and provider barriers and facilitators to integrating mindfulness-based interventions for African American pregnant women into obstetrics care at safety-net hospitals. In my opinion, this research will provide a valuable foundation for Marcia to establish her expertise in maternal and child health, implementation science, and health equity. It is also worth noting even as a student, Marcia is actually already sought out for her expertise – she has been invited to provide multiple guest lectures at Emory that were very well received.

In recognition of Marcia's significant academic and research accomplishments, she has received numerous honors including the George W. Woodruff Fellowship, the Mirabai Bush Contemplative Scholar award, and induction into the Delta Omega Honor Society. I am confident Marcia's future in the field of health promotion is extremely bright. I know she plans to pursue an academic career within behavioral health sciences with the specific goal of utilizing implementation science and community-based approaches to advance maternal and child mental health, and I believe she absolutely has the skills, curiosity, and determination to achieve this goal. I would also like to add that Marcia is a team-player. She has proven to be a valued and supportive mentor to other graduate students in our THRIVE lab. In her research she seeks to promote cultures of compassion, and she embodies these values in the way she personally conducts herself and works with others. For all these reasons, I fully recommend Marcia as a truly exceptional applicant for the Dr. Delbert Oberteuffer award.

Sincerely,



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