Scholarship and Awards Committee,

It is with great humility; I seek the honor of applying for the Dr. Mary K. Beyrer Graduate Scholarship. As a graduate student pursing my PhD in Health education, I am truly enjoying the last realm of my educational journey. For many years, through my leadership positions in Eta Sigma Gamma, I have encouraged students with financial needs to apply for the scholarships that our organization has perfectly created for them. Now, I am in a space where I am the student with the financial need to continue to purse my education journey and see my dreams and the efforts of my parents make it to the finish line. In my doctoral journey at Texas A&M University, I reignited my purpose and contribution to the field of health education to ensure that my work will have a positive lasting impact on communities in need. Through my research, scholarship, and service, I have created a niche and desire to have a career goal in impacting the lives of black and African American students to ensure that their specific health behaviors are researched to prevent and manage type 2 diabetes. Too often college students and college students of color are overlooked in research, and I want to give them a voice where there has historically been limited scholars of color advocating for them through research. It is also my hopes that while I desire to spend my time in the classroom training the next generation of critical thinking and inclusive health educators, that my research will influence interventions for college students of color to prevent adult type 2 diabetes.

The Dr. Mary K. Beyrer Graduate Scholarship will not only continue to support me as the entire ESG organization has over the past 5 years, but it would also allow me to add a bit of resources to my research and professional development. I joined Eta Sigma Gamma-Eta chapter at Central Michigan University in Spring 2016. My accomplishments in ESG are by no means only a reflection of my personal work but because I was surrounded by some of the most amazing young professionals. Serving as the education chair and research chair were my favorite roles as I got an opportunity to lead innovative and novel projects. For example, in my last year in the Eta chapter, I lead its first research project using secondary data and data analysis that was presented at the National SOPHE Conference. I kept that same passion and drive for novelty when I joined the Alpha Pi chapter as I won its first APHA students climate change champion award and adopted a street in the chapters honor.

Along with ESG, SOPHE has played a critical role in my development as well. Looking back and starting from a general student member in 2018, attending my first national conference, that was the first if many doors opened for me in the health education sector. As the current student trustee on the national SOPHE Board of Trustees, I get to vividly advocate for students and young professionals and propose activities that are diverse and inclusive for students who have been typically underrepresented in the organization. My favorite way to serve SOPHE is by being a judge for the Case Study competition. This was a competition that I myself won in 2020 and returned as a judge in 2021 to give back to the students and inform decision making using my CHES credentials.

My health education organizations have given me a lifetime of experience that I continue to share with others. This scholarship would be the same. Not only will it help me financially, but I will ensure that I give my gratitude in service to the organizations and the next generation of health education leaders. Thank you in advance for your consideration.