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GREENSBORO

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Public Health Education

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Dear Selection Committee:

I am writing to express my highest recommendation of Tala Najjar for the Dr. Becky J. Smith Scholarship through the Foundation for the Advancement of Health Education (FAHE). I have been lucky to work with Tala both as a professor and as the Undergraduate Public Health Education Internship Coordinator. I am impressed by Tala's commitment to health equity, her intellectualism, and her creativity and drive. A full-time student and academic standout, Tala has been on the Chancellor's List for three semesters; her current GPA is 3.98. Tala is amongst the most promising students I have encountered in over a decade teaching at UNC Greensboro.

Tala is at-once intellectually incisive and whole-hearted. A deep, critical thinker, Tala not only excels at using data to generate findings and applying and synthesizing evidence, she also asks fantastic questions particularly around exploring and improving health equity. Tala skillfully and joyfully engages the connections among identifying problems, asking questions, and applying findings, while always keeping her attention focused on how we can equitably support and improve the lives of our partner communities.

In and out of the classroom, Tala connects easily with a wide swath of people. She has excellent communication skills and is able to explain complex topics to a variety of audiences. She is a strong, gentle leader whose perspectives and skills are appreciated and respected by peers, professors, and members of our wider community. We all immensely value her presence and contributions both within and beyond UNC Greensboro. On a more personal note, I have been honored and humbled to teach and learn with students whose college experience has been so deeply impacted by Covid-19 and by the illumination of white supremacist violence in the United States. Students like Tala, who find ways to not only connect with, but to truly see the promise of, what public health education can offer fill me with hope. To me, Tala represents the promise of the next generation of public health educators.

Tala is remarkable. Her robust academic record, strong communication and leadership abilities, and public health education skills and aptitude make her an excellent candidate the Dr. Becky J. Smith Scholarship. I look forward to following what I know will be a wonderful career.

Sincerely,

Meredith R. Gringle, PhD, MPH
Academic Professional: Assistant Professor
Undergraduate Public Health Education Internship Coordinator