



THE UNIVERSITY of NORTH CAROLINA  
**GREENSBORO**

School of Health and Human Performance  
Department of Public Health Education

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Foundation for the Advancement of Health Education  
Dr. Becky J. Smith Scholarship

Reference letter for: Tia Johnson

Dear Dr. Becky J. Smith Scholarship Committee,

I write this very enthusiastic letter in support of Tia Johnson, a student of mine who is applying for the Dr. Becky J. Smith Scholarship. I have had the wonderful opportunity to have Tia in my Introduction to Public Health course at the University of North Carolina, Greensboro (UNCG) Department of Public Health Education and am very happy to speak to the qualities she has that speak to health education success: academic potential, interdisciplinary thinking, character, commitment to equity and what I have observed of her integrity and personal qualities.

Tia is a very personable and sincere person; professors occasionally look for go-to people who they rely on for assistance in classroom discussions and activities – Tia was one of my go-to students. In all my dealings with Tia she has shown the followings characteristics – honesty, integrity, humbleness, forthrightness, and enthusiasm. I am delighted that Tia is a student in our Community Health Education Major program, and I am excited for her. Tia is what I am calling a post-COVID attentive student. By that I mean students who went through COVID and had some iteration of hybrid learning. I have observed, at least in my classes, that post-COVID some students do not attend class unless there is a mandatory attendance policy or something else that demands that they attend. I did not have an attendance policy nor have I ever in 27 years, but this year in particular I noticed a huge drop in attendance. Tia and a few of her colleagues were the few that came to every class and contributed at a level that I felt was herculean given the content we were covering.

Our program in Public Health Education focuses on social justice, health disparities and community engagement and I have seen Tia grow measurably in these areas over the next few years – she has already shown how committed she is. Tia often apologized for asking so many questions in class, I corrected her and said that was the very quality that set her apart – she was



and is READY to experience the world and is asking all those questions for a reason. Here are a few examples of what makes Tia a great candidate for the Dr. Becky Smith Scholarship:

- 3.17 GPA
- Inducted Eta Sigma Gamma
- Attended 2023 Michigan School of Public Health 6-week Summer Leadership Program
- Member of Black Student Union, UNCG
- Member of Farmer Food share Volunteer Group, UNCG
- Participated - Zero Prostate Cancer Walk, UNCG

Tia has made it clear to me that a life in service, especially in the health education arena relating to communities, is her passion. Given this, I urge the committee to fully consider Tia as a worthy representative of the Dr. Becky J. Smith Scholarship.

Kindest regards,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Mike Perko".

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