NORTH CAROLINA
AGRICULTURAL AND TECHNICAL
STATE UNIVERSITY

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A LAND-GRANT UNIVERSITY *and* A CONSTITUENT INSTITUTION *of* THE UNIVERSITY *of* NORTH CAROLINA

February 22, 2022

Dear Sir/ Madam,

I am excited about the opportunity to apply for the Minority Serving Institution (MSI) mentoring program. I am an Associate Professor of Economics at North Carolina A and T State University (NCA&T). Historically, minority economics majors have been low and this has drawn the attention of several professionals and stakeholders. My goal is to develop an experiment which will contribute to solving this economics pipeline problem. This research will focus on two HBCU's, NCA&T and Howard University. Increasing the number of minorities in economics is an important issue and I believe this grant will help me in answering this question as well as contributing to knowledge in this area. I have in the past submitted several one pager proposal ideas to NSF program directors for review however I have not been able to fully develop any of these for funding due to several reasons some of which include understanding the NSF funding mechanism as well as knowing how to develop an NSF grant.

As an Assistant Professor and even now as an Associate Professor of economics I have seen and experienced how mentoring plays a role in advancing a person's goals. I see this daily especially while interacting with my mentor Professor Elizabeth Asiedu of Howard University. A small group of young Black women economists meet with her about twice a month and at these mentoring sessions I am able to express myself, share my thoughts as well as get guidance on what I need to do to advance my career. This mentorship experience as well as other indirect mentorship experiences is what drives my desire to provide a similar environment for minorities in Economics. In 2014, out of 104 HBCU's in the country, only 40 were offering a degree in Economics. Furthermore, there has been a reduction in the number of HBCU's with an economics department and one reason is the low enrollment in economics. Between 2006-2015, 13 percent of the bachelor's degree in economics was conferred by HBCUs. This is a decrease from 16 percent between 1996-2005 (Sharpe, 2018). Recent data are not available; however I believe the trend continues. This is a serious issue since it reduces the chances of being able to train the next generation of minorities in economics. My research hence will focus on increasing the number of economics majors among minorities in two HBCU's.

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I see the value in being able to develop a research grant, do the research as well as the opportunity it creates for student support. I am currently a Co-PI on a USDA grant that is looking at the economics of hemp production in North Carolina. With my background in agricultural economics my role in this research is understanding the main factors that drives hemp production in North Carolina. I am also a Co-PI on another grant with USDA which is measuring consumer preference in plant-based foods. This proposal is currently under review. These grants provide support for students as well as provide students with an opportunity to be engaged in the research and that itself is a way by which students are mentored and receive direction as they pursue their degree. While I have been successful as a Co-PI in USDA grant I am aware that the funding mechanism for each organization is very different and this includes the NSF. Additionally, these grants are housed in the College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences. I believe this research is an opportunity for me to serve as a PI on a grant which will be housed in the College of Business and Economics. It will also provide the resources needed in answering the important question "Why are economics majors so few?" Additionally, I will get a one-on-one mentoring as I develop the proposal for this highly relevant research. This mentoring opportunity will also equip me with the skills to develop other future proposals that I have in mind. I believe this is a lifelong skill and it is a step in the right direction as I move my career forward and continue to mentor minority students in economics.

While NCA&T University is moving towards becoming an R01 institution the role of funded grants and high level research as well as increased production of top quality students for the labor market are important in advancing this goal. As a minority, I believe that this mentoring program will provide me with the knowledge and skills that I need as I advance in my career and serve my institution and the academe. My dean Kevin James is also excited about this opportunity. He is willing to address any questions you may have. His contact is kljames@ncat.edu. My chair is also very happy about this opportunity. I have included in my CV a list of funded grants.

I will be very happy if I am considered in the program. Please feel free to reach out to me by email at fasiseh@ncat.edu. My office line is 336-285-3328 and my personal contact is 336- 457-3210.

Sincerely,

Fafanyo Asiseh

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EDUCATION

PhD Economics Washington State University 2013
MSc Applied Economics University of Idaho 2008
BSc Agricultural Economics University of Ghana 2004

EMPLOYMENT HISTORY

Associate Professor: North Carolina A and T State University, July 2020 to present
Assistant Professor: North Carolina A and T State University, August 2013 to June 2020
Teaching Assistant: Washington State University 2008-2013
Teaching Assistant: University of Idaho 2007-2008

RESEARCH and TEACHING INTEREST

Macro Economics
Development Economics
Statistics
Gender Economics
Health Economics

PUBLICATIONS

- "Financial Liberalization and its implications for Private Savings in Sub-Saharan Africa" (with Asiedu, E., Mannah-Blankson, T., and Paintsil A. J.) in The Domestic Savings Shortfall in Sub Saharan Africa: What Can Be Done about It? United Nations University World International Development and Economic Research (UNU-WIDER), forthcoming
- "COVID-19-induced Learning Disabilities and the Academic Experiences of U.S. College Student" (with Mannah-Blankson T), *Insights into Learning Disabilities*,2021, 18(2), 109-119
- "A Cost Benefit Analysis of IPM Decision Support Tools for Potato Psyllids in Idaho, Oregon, and Washington" (with Greenway, G., & Quaicoe, O.) *American Journal of Potato Research*, 2021, 98 (2), 122-129
- "The Business of Hemp in North Carolina: Where the Rubber Meets the Road" (with Quaicoe, O. and Isikhuemhen, O.S.) *Journal of Agricultural Hemp Research*, 2020, 1 (2) 3
- "An Economic Analysis of Household Income Inequality and BMI in China" (with Yao, J). *Journal of Economic Development*, 2019, 44(1), 23-37
- "Ethnic Differences in the Influence of Peers on Weight-Related Behavior" (with Ajilore, O.) *The Review of Black Political Economy*, 2018, 45(1), 69-90
- "The Association between Food Insecurity and Child Health Outcomes in Low and Middle-income Countries". (with Naanwaab, C., & Quaicoe, O.,) *Journal of African Development*, 2018, 20(2), 79-90

- "Explaining the Saving Behavior of Households' in Ethiopia, Africa" (Asare, E., Segarra, E., Gertrude, N.) *Applied Economics and Finance*, 2018, 5(2), 143-151
- "An Analysis of Family Dynamics on High School Adolescent Risky Behaviors in Ghana". (with Owusu, A., and Quaicoe, O.) *Journal of Child & Adolescent Substance Abuse*, 2017, 26(5), 425-431
- "Agricultural Factor Use and Substitution in the South-Eastern United States". (with Ejimakor, G., Quaicoe, O.,) *Studies in Agricultural Economics*, 2017, 119 (3), 156-159
- "Family Income and Body Mass Index–What Have We Learned from China". (with Yao, J.) *Health Economics Review*, 2016, 6(1), 52
- "Factors Influencing Growth of Dairy Product Manufacturing in the United States". (with Devadoss, S., Bolotova, Y., Foltz, J. C., and Haggerty, R. J.,) *International Food and Agribusiness Management Review*, 2010, 13:1-16.
- "Evaluating Economic Performance of Food Manufacturing Industries: An Analysis of the US Pacific Northwest States". (with Bolotova, Y.) *Journal of Food Distribution Research*, 2009, *40*: 130-143

GRANTS (Selected)

- Project: The Economics of hemp production and research. Implications on Farmers in North Carolina. (with Quaicoe, O., Anike, F., and Isikhuemhen, O.)
  - Funding Agency: USDA
  - Amount: $499,945
  - Years: (2020-2023)
- Project: Alternative Hog Production Systems (with Quaicoe O. and Ejimakor G.)
  - Funding Agency: USDA
  - Amount:$19,998
  - Year: (2021-2022)
- Project: Application of the banker trap Plant (BTrap) concept to trap cropping for the management of the Harlequin Bug, a pest of Brassicaceae: A new paradigm in small farm IPM. (with Jackai, L., and Dingha, B.)
  - Funding Agency: USDA
  - Amount: $257,986
  - Periods: (2018-2023)
- Project**:** Continuing and Expanding the ERS Distance Learning Outreach Initiative. (with Ejimakor G and Hyeng, C)
  - Funding Agency: USDA
  - Amount $4500
  - Period: (2016-2016)

CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS and WORKSHOPS (Selected)

- Western Economic Association International Conference, Portland, July 2022
- Teaching Economics Online, St. Louis Fed Professors Conference, 2020
- Designing Effective Online Courses, University of North Carolina (UNC) System, 2020
- 18th Annual Economics Teaching Workshop, UNC, Wilmington, 2019

- American Social Science Association (ASSA) conference, January, 2019
- Eastern Economic Association Meeting, March 2018
- Midwest Economic Association Meeting, March 2018
- American Social Science Association (ASSA) conference, January, 2018
- American Social Science Association (ASSA) conference, January, 2018

AWARDS and HONORS (Selected)

- Honorary Member, Golden Key International Society, 2017
- ADVANCE IT Faculty Scholar, 2016
- Diversity Initiative for Tenure in Economics (DITE), Cohort (7), 2014-2015
- Washington State University Presidents Leadership Award, 2011
- Margaret McNamara Memorial Fellowship Recipient, 2011
- Population Reference Bureau Policy Communication Fellow, 2011
- Population Reference Bureau Compton International Fellow, 2011
- Recipient Dr. Jeff Krautkraemer "Pay it Forward" Scholarship, 2009
- Recipient International Student Leadership Award, University of Idaho, 2008

SERVICE to the PROFESSION (Selected)

- Conference session organizer: ASSA, Southern Economics Association, Western Economics Association.
- Member of Scholarship Committee, American Society of Hispanic Economists ASHE
- African Finance and Economics Association, member of Membership Drive Board
- Advisor, Omicron Delta Epsilon (Honor's society for Economics students)
- Reviewer (selected): Australian Economic Papers, Energy Economics, Journal of Family and Economic Issues, Journal of Black Political Economy.

MEMBERSHIP in PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATION (Selected)

- National Economic Association
- Association for the Advancement of African Women Economists
- American Economic Association
- Population Association of America
- Association Society of Health Economists

Representation of minority graduates in the field of economics remains low. The committee on the status of minority groups profession reports that in 2018, minorities made up only 16 percent of the total undergraduate degree in economics. This ongoing problem has not changed over the past two decades hence it raises serious concerns. A low representation of minorities in economics will have an impact on the economics pipeline. Additionally, it may hamper the economics profession as well as limit the different perspectives through which issues and policies can be discussed.

One major constraint to the issue of low economics majors is the lack of role models in the field. Previous studies (Sharpe 2018, Porter and Serra 2020, Lundberg and Stearns 2019) have found that role models play an immense role in the choice of majors by undergraduate students and this is missing in economics. Porter and Serra (2020) introduced students who were taking the principles of economics course to a successful alumnus of that institution who had majored in economics. They find the intervention impacted female student enrollment in further economics classes. This was conducted in a private college. Building on this work, the objective of our study is to use a successful alumni role model as treatment in a lower level economics class to investigate how role models can bridge the gap in economics among minority undergraduate students. The study will focus on two HBCUs' namely North Carolina A and T State University (NCA&T) and Howard University. NCA&T and Howard have both produced highly successful students in economics. These two Universities enroll a high percentage of African American students each year. If funded, I will be collaborating with Professor Elizabeth Asiedu at Howard University in this study.

Intellectual merit: This study will advance the perspective of role models as either barriers or pathways for increasing the percentage of minority economics undergraduates and in the labor force. The expected results will therefore contribute to knowledge in bridging the gap between minorities economists in the country. Additionally, this research will also advance knowledge on the role of HBCU's in attracting and minorities into economics. Finally, this study will provide an understanding on factors that contribute to minorities in HBCU's choice of economics as a major.

Broader impacts: An understanding of the contribution of role models and institutions in student choice of major will impact policy making decisions on the broader level. If role models promote more economics majors then policy interventions should consider measures that can be used to support these institutions. Additionally, this will not only promote economics graduates but in general graduation among minorities. If this study proves to be successful then this could be scaled to other HBCU's as well as other minority serving institutions in the country.

References:

Lundberg, S., & Stearns, J. (2019). Women in economics: Stalled progress. *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, *33*(1), 3-22.

Porter, C., & Serra, D. (2020). Gender differences in the choice of major: The importance of female role models. *American Economic Journal: Applied Economics*, *12*(3), 226-54.

Sharpe, R. V. (2018). We've to build the pipeline. What's the problem? What's next? The remix. *The Review of Black Political Economy*, *45*(3), 191-215.