Name: XX Date:

Personal Statement

My interest in science started when I was six years old while my dad pursued his doctoral degree. Growing up, my interest in science continued to grow, and my father supported it by giving me independent mini-projects that were extremely fundamental. My experience helped me develop patience, perseverance, and admiration for the scientific world. To prepare for my career goal of becoming a scientist, I graduated from one of the most challenging magnet programs offered, the Rickards High School International Baccalaureate (I.B.) program located in Tallahassee, Florida.

After completing my Bachelor of Science in Environmental Studies at FSU, I decided to pursue my Master of Science in molecular biology at FAMU, where I specifically focused on the effects of cadmium on human health. I then enrolled as a doctoral student at Florida A & M University. Currently, I am investigating the role of Diallyl Trisulfide (DATS; a garlic organosulfide) on Tumor Necrosis Factor Alpha (TNF-α) Induced Cancer Progression on Triple-Negative Breast Cancer (TNBC). The objective of my study is to use two ethnically and genetically different TNBC cell lines, MDA-MB-231, and MDA-MB468 cells, of Caucasian and African-American origin, respectively, to understand DATS mechanism of action. As a Ph.D. Candidate, I have already published my first article in the journal Anticancer Research and I currently have a manuscript in preparation entitled "Anticancer effect of Garlic Organosulfide Diallyl Trisulfide (DATS) on TNF-α-Induced MDA-MB-231 and MDA-MB-468 Triple-Negative Breast Cancer Cells". My expected graduation date for my Ph.D. degree is July of this year.

To achieve my career goals, I must expand my knowledge of molecular, proteomic, and genomic approach to Cancer biology. I can accomplish my career endeavors by participating in the Florida State University Provost Postdoctoral Fellowship Program (PPFP). I believe that the critical knowledge, skills, and experience gained through the PPFP program will mold me into a successful competitive postdoctoral researcher and, ultimately, an assistant professor. From the program list of faculty mentors, I am interested in working with Dr. YY (Faculty Mentor). The project in Dr. YY's lab will provide an excellent training opportunity for me. I will acquire new scientific techniques in whole-genome sequencing and "Cut and Tag" technology. As a postdoctoral fellow, I will develop a research strategy to determine genetic alterations and epigenetic modifications involved in keloid formation among people of different skin color (people of African descent being the most susceptible). This research will allow me to work with various professors in different areas such as biomedical, biochemical, and biological sciences, thereby fostering an environment for me to mature into an independent researcher. In addition, I will be able to train students, network, and present my research. PPFP will provide a platform conducive to writing manuscripts and grants, improving my presentation skills, and developing professionalism.

By the end of PPFP, I will have gained the experience and tools necessary for the subsequent phases of my scientific career. It is my goal to become a successful principal investigator eventually. I believe that the invaluable expertise acquired from participation in the PPFP will help me develop my independent research. I am interested in studying natural compounds as a potential novel therapeutic agent against cancer. The wisdom acquired from PPFP will help me apply for

and secure an NIH R01 and or R21 grant to further my career. It is my goal to publish articles yearly and attend scientific meetings to network and present my research. PPFP will improve my communication skills and research techniques and mold me into a great professor. Mentoring students is a great passion of mine, and I enjoy teaching.

Aside from being a scientist and part of my career goals, I want to positively impact and give back to my community through active service in several organizations. I currently serve as the community service director for the Omega Lamplighters (OLL) mentoring programs. I volunteer at the homeless shelter; I participate in the AIDS Walk, Relay for Life, March of Dimes, and I volunteer with Grace Mission Episcopal Church by helping with the food set up & cleaning up. In addition, I am a member of Eternal Legendary Kings inc. (community service organization), T.O.Y.S. (community service organization), National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), Alpha Phi Omega National Service Fraternity, Inc., and Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Inc. PPFP will provide not only a professional avenue but also a way for me to continue to give back to my community. Since the goal of PPFP is to increase diversity among candidates seeking careers in academia, given the opportunity, I will be able to increase the academic diversity as an African American postdoctoral fellow in my chosen field. I will then be a role model for the African American student I mentor via the OLL mentoring program interested in STEM and the FAMU BRIDGES Program students. The BRIDGES program focuses on encouraging high school minority students to major in STEM disciplines by competing in small research projects at a participating university. I had the opportunity to train two African American girls to develop their 1st place winning project. I was so proud of them. I made it my mission to bring exciting scientific demonstrations, discussions, and information to the youth to boost their zeal for science. I want to be a positive, motivational type of teacher who encourages his students to work hard and do their best the same way my first mentor (my father) taught me.

I am grateful for the early exposure to science, which is broad, interrelated, and enjoyable. As a graduate student to date, my exposure has allowed me to be prepared in all aspects of laboratory discipline and gain additional analytical skills needed to excel in my scientific career. Given the opportunity, via PPFP I will actively assist the professor in seeking opportunities in research, the classroom, and across campus to enhance diversity and opportunity for individuals from historically underrepresented backgrounds. Furthermore, I will seek scholarship and fellowship opportunities for minority students in my lab and the department. In addition, I will regularly volunteer in the interns' program for undergraduate and high school students interested in my research. I believe that diversity inclusion in the classroom and research lab is critical for academic and research success. I believe that scientific communication is key, and its connections to people and institutions beyond borders.