

November 10, 2014

To whom it may concern:

I am pleased with this letter, on behalf of the Institute for Broadening Participation (IBP) and myself, to offer to collaborate and support the proposed *Sportin' the Grade Academy's* athletic and science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) enhancement program. *Sportin' the Grade Academy's* activities are well conceived and have a substantial amount of potential to facilitate the further development, greater retention and ultimately, the increased graduation of more underrepresented minority athletes with STEM degrees. By engaging in afterschool supplemental STEM educational activities, advanced athletic training, college preparation and professional development opportunities, K-12 students who participate in the *Sportin' the Grade Academy* will undoubtedly be better prepared to succeed throughout their K-12 and college careers. Because of its significant potential for impacting underrepresented minority students who may become future STEM scholars, as well as the valuable professional development opportunities that this program will offer to current underrepresented minority STEM scholars and athletes who will serve as *Sportin' the Grade* tutors, STEM instructors and coaches, IBP will readily offer its assistance with implementing and supporting the proposed activities.

The overall mission of IBP (a 501 (c) (3) nonprofit organization) is to increase diversity in the STEM workforce. IBP has extensive experience in assisting institutions and organizations with recruitment, retention and professional development efforts via its National Science Foundation and NASA sponsored activities. IBP is well informed about successful strategies for broadening participation of underrepresented minorities in STEM. In its development and implementation of the *IGERT National Recruitment Program* (2002-2008), IBP assisted more than 100 interdisciplinary STEM programs across the country to implement recruitment and retention plans and broaden the diversity of their student participants. Working with *AGEP* (2007 – present), IBP developed an extensive web portal, database, and suite of printed materials to build stronger awareness of *AGEP* in the broader community and to assist *AGEP* students at over 190 institutions in transitioning into the professoriate. In support of the *NASA One Stop Shop Initiative (OSSI)*, IBP has created and implemented comprehensive plans for recruitment, outreach, support and evaluation, and leveraged opportunities to work together with other *OSSI* stakeholders. IBP has extensive experience facilitating mentoring of students through its NSF OEDG and NASA funded *MS PHD'S (Minorities Striving and Pursuing Higher Degrees of Success in Earth System Science) Program*.

As IBP's Executive Director and founder of the MS PHD'S Professional Development and Mentoring Program, I was awarded the 2009 Presidential Award for Excellence in Science Mathematics Engineering Mentoring (PAESMEM) at the White House, as a result of my dedication towards facilitating the participation of underrepresented minorities in STEM programs and careers throughout the US. It gives me great pleasure to offer IBP's assistance in

facilitating Sportin' the Grade Academy activities, as well as my expertise in helping to design and execute the STEM academic enrichment, college preparation and professional development activities.

In support of this project, IBP will commit to working with Dr. Andrew Green and/or other designated *Sportin' the Grade Academy* leadership to facilitate student recruitment, professional development, college preparation and tracking activities, and also to offering guidance in designing appropriate assessment tools for evaluating its programmatic activities. In addition, IBP is willing to serve as the initial fiduciary agent for *Sportin' the Grade Academy*.

It is my sincere belief that the *Sportin' the Grade Academy* has significant potential to immediately impact future underrepresented minority athletes and STEM scholars in the Houston, TX area, and if provided with the proper resources to grow, eventually this exciting new effort could greatly impact young underrepresented minority athletes and STEM scholars across the US. Because of this, I strongly encourage you to support this worthwhile endeavor. Should you require any additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ashanti Johnson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a horizontal line at the end.

Ashanti Johnson, Ph.D.
Executive Director