

January 12, 2023

Tenure and Promotion Committee
Norfolk State University
700 Park Avenue
Norfolk, VA 23504

Dear Tenure and Promotion Committee,

I am truly honored to provide a letter of unwavering support for Dr. Sharon T. Alston who is applying for Tenure and promotion to Associate Professor at Norfolk State University, Norfolk, VA, an urban comprehensive public institution committed to transforming people's lives and their communities. In essence, Dr. Alston's commitment and work aligns precisely with the university's mission of transformation, empowerment, aspiration, and preparation of leaders for the future.

As an emerging brilliant educator and scholar, Dr. Alston has made important intellectual contributions to the profession, social work education, and the research enterprise. Her contributions are firmly grounded in core characteristics of integrity, competence, compassion, lifting as we climb, and unquestionable work ethics which she has consistently lived, and have facilitated her success in academia. As her mentor for over a decade, I have had the privilege of witnessing her brilliance and humanity consistently in our women of color writing retreats, intellectual spaces, and interactions with students and faculty. I have no doubt that her presence in academia and particularly at Norfolk State University is consequential for upcoming generations of young women of color scholars from underrepresented and underserved communities.

Evident in her dossier and witnessed first-hand, Dr. Alston, as an independent thinker who is committed to the collective good, has brilliantly integrated her teaching, scholarship, and service contributions. Her work is strategic, timely, and responsive to social and economic justice issues of the time. She has leveraged her integrated commitment through publication and grantsmanship in areas including aspirations of female youth; interdisciplinary research, policy practice, and leadership including women's leadership as a force for community change and combatting discriminatory practices; and health and housing equity as social determinants of health during the COVID-19 pandemic. In all, ultimately informing her passion for effective teaching and learning communities that will empower and prepare professionals and leaders for the future.

Overall, Dr. Alston's contributions in teaching, scholarship, and service aligns precisely with the transformational mission and future of Norfolk State University. Without a doubt, her accomplishments are meritorious in scope and quality, and overall reflects professional stature that is commensurate with Tenure and Associate Professor rank at Norfolk State University. Thank you for this opportunity to provide a letter of unwavering support for Dr. Sharon T Alston. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at hvakalahi@hpu.edu or 808-236-5812 or effective January 16, 2023 at vakalahihfo@gmail.com.

Respectfully yours,



Halaevalu F.O. Vakalahi, Ph.D.
Dean and Professor