October 10, 2024

Dear Application Review Committee:

My passion is my work to encourage and cultivate diversity that inspires underrepresented groups and communities toward greater access to generational wealth. Hence, I am highly connected to the preponderance of socially disadvantaged communities, which are family owned and disproportionately affected by the climate crisis. Building climate resilience and equity will require an innovation ecosystem in which (1) stakeholder needs are communicated to researchers and (2) research discoveries are translated into tangible contributions to rural community sustainability and (3) scholastic achievement at the highest level for both undergraduate and graduate students. Therefore, I am highly blessed and favored by this application for the position of Dean of the College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources at Texas A&M University-Commerce.

The new Dean of the College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources at Texas A&M University-Commerce will have a momentous opportunity to uphold the highest standards for academic excellence and accomplishment and serve as the spokesperson of the College.   Key to this opportunity will be the contribution of the outreach arm of College's outreach teams that lower social, cultural, and economic barriers to upward mobility which includes subject-matter specialists and paraprofessionals who will deliver cutting-edge programs through centers across the region, particularly in underserved rural areas.

I have broad experience working with 21st century climate smart agricultural work across a diverse variety of groups across the South including university administrators, researchers, educators, students, and community members. My work is well-documented in prior peer-reviewed literature, and my publications are globally cited by other researchers. While at NASA Kennedy Space Center, Cape Canaveral, FL, served as science advisor for Tuskegee University's Center for Food and Environmental Systems for Human Exploration of Space (CFESH). 1999-2002. For this work I received NASA's Space Flight Awareness Award (Highest NASA Science Researcher Award) – 2001 For Success in Controlled Environment Agriculture for designing experiments with Potato (on Space Shuttle STS-73) and Wheat (on International Space Station). My teaching, research, and outreach experiences have propelled my interactions all over the world and beyond, including farming experiments in outer space aboard the Space Shuttle and the International Space Station. Hence, my record specifically demonstrates deep understanding associated with food crop improvement and production systems, biotechnology and genomics of food crops, environmental sustainability, and outreach and training of underserved communities.
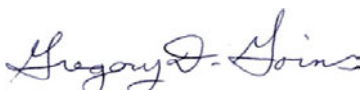
Here, I highlight some recent accomplishments involving collaborative partnerships founded on long-term significant linkages between academia, government, private industry, and local organizations:

- I am the PI on a $1M NSF Regional Innovation Engine Project, the only NSF Engine by a HBCU in the nation. Also I recently Co-Lead the NSF National Convergence Accelerator Summit for Digital and Precision Agriculture. Here it is important that research includes data about minorities and disadvantaged regions. The worst effects of climate change are often most severe in socially disadvantaged regions. I am driven to help all farmers – but particularly small, limited-resource and minority farmers - learn and participate in climate-smart programs and technologies. At the same time as Associate Dean for Agricultural Research at NCA&T, I have led our college to have its highest funded research level at over $45 million in 2024 alone.

- I possess considerable understanding at the critical junctures between environmental, agricultural, and biological research to gain extramural funding. At NC A&T, I have submitted over $100 million of research grants and have been funded in different capacities by NSF, USDA, and NIH for over $25 million. Likewise, my knowledge of conduction on-farm experiments with digital and precision agricultural technologies will help enable CAFS to find ways that these integrated digital systems will enable farms to sustain environmental quality and operate more efficiently. Artificial intelligence (AI) also holds much promise to help farmers increase their ability to predict the future. Field-deployable sensors for monitoring crop and livestock health in real time, and forecasting data from field maps, to help reduce overapplication of soil amendments and pesticides, are just two examples of this exciting frontier.

- I led the establishment of Small Farm Resource and Innovation Center (SFRIC). The SFRIC is a clearinghouse for education, resources, and news to serve NC's small farmers, with a special emphasis on limited-resource and socially disadvantaged farmers in underserved communities. Farming realities of the 21st century – including the need to sustain environmental quality and operate more efficiently – have renewed interest in small-scale farming around the globe. Smaller, often family-based farms are suddenly in the spotlight, and so, too is their role in ensuring the vitality of rural communities. SFRIC is a means by which the N.C. A&T addresses the historical inequities that have hindered small farmers and under-represented minorities. The SFRIC enables small farmers to find information more easily about business and marketing practices, grant opportunities, local food networks and farmers markets, and innovative approaches that can increase their productivity and profitability.

- I am an established entity in the national conversation in the re-shaping of science curricula, dissemination, and broadening participation (i.e., USDA 4-H National Science Experiment, 2010 co-author; recently appointed by Secretary Vilsack as Chairman of the Specialty Crop Committee). I also served as a rotating Program Officer at the National Science Foundation. Furthermore, I was recognized by President Barak Obama as a Champion of Change for HBCUs at the White House.

My knowledge and skill set translate very well to this position. I am diplomatic in working with a diverse variety of groups across campus including administrators, researchers, educators, students, and community members. My attached career record shows that I am an effective administrator, communicator, and analytical thinker; a must for this administrative role and in 21st century climate smart agriculture. If selected, I look forward to leading CASNR's pursuit of excellence in teaching, research, and extension as outlined in the university's strategic plan. As Dean, I would look forward to leading an exciting new model of agricultural excellence at Dean of the College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources at Texas A&M University-Commerce that connects relevant knowledge to the right people, at the right time and place.

Yours sincerely,

Gregory D. Goins, Ph.D.