Statement of Intent

VCU, Master of Decision Analysis (M.D.A.)

October 30, 2018

Office of Graduate Admissions
VCU College of Business
Snead Hall
301 West Main Street
Richmond, VA 23284-4000

To whom it may concern:

In my opinion, the most critical practice an individual can do to be successful in life, is to invest in themselves. I am a strong believer that, whatever you do, you should never stop learning. This past summer, I conveyed my desire to continue my education to the Virginia State Corporation Commission (SCC) and was granted the opportunity and financial support to earn a master's degree. I have decided to pursue VCU's Master of Decision Analytics (M.D.A.) program to obtain a more specific skill that will improve the SCC, accelerate my career, improve myself and expand my network of peers. The variety of experiences I have in government administration, information technology, small business consulting, and retail management will enable me to contribute to my fellow classmates and ensure my success in the program.

Growing up, I have always had a passion for solving problems and making processes more efficient; whether it meant unloading the dishwasher or changing the oil in my car. I continued to enjoy team-work, in classes at East Carolina University (ECU), such as organizational development and strategic management, that included problem solving, creativity, the chance to assess weakness, and identify success factors in real world business scenarios. From that point on, I have tailored my experience to specifically give me problem solving skills in different industries that will allow me to achieve my goal of becoming a business consultant or project manager.

My experiences have vested me to love problem solving and each has emphasized the importance of data analysis. During my senior year at ECU, I was selected to join the top 30 students in the Business School to become a Strategic Business Consultant for a senior level Strategic Management Co-Op. During this opportunity, I was on a team of individuals with different business majors (accounting, marketing, finance, etc.) and backgrounds to increase the organizational effectiveness of a high-end retail company in New Bern, North Carolina. We gathered data, conducted value chain analysis, and identified opportunities for improvement. Our predictive analysis showed a $10,000 increase in value by implementing our suggested e-commerce and marketing plans. This Co-Op challenge made me realize how much I enjoyed using data to analyze areas of improvement.

In 2016 CVS Health's Retail Management internship helped provide me with additional data analytics, financial, consulting, and management skills. This opportunity allowed me to collect and analyze data on inventory, employee behavior, and the customer experience to develop performance scorecards. Based on these scorecards I provided additional training to the staff and developed internal controls and processes that improved the store's performance by 3% YTD within a month of implementing my plan.

One of the main reasons I have decided to apply for VCU's M.D.A. program is to better position myself and my organization in the rapidly evolving marketplace as well as to keep pace with consumer behavior, best practices, and technological advances. After graduating with a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration and Management from ECU, I accepted a job offer from the SCC to be a business analyst

liaison between the Virginia Bureau of Insurance (BOI) and Information Technology Division. Since graduation, I have had the opportunity to travel, obtain certifications, attend work conferences and work on executive projects, legislative changes, and technology updates as well as join top administrators to make a difference in the SCC. My main responsibility has been to create system solutions for employees and clients to enhance and streamline process workflows. The knowledge this program provides me will allow me to use data to create opportunities, produce specialized reports, make critical decisions, identify technology improvements, and expand data resources to empower SCC employees.

As part of the Agent Licensing application process in Virginia, the BOI is introducing legislation in 2022, requiring individuals to get their fingerprints scanned and undergo criminal history background checks. This is the largest agent licensing project the BOI has undertaken in over 30 years. Being the primary lead for the fingerprinting part of this project, I have worked with BOI management, the Virginia State Police and FBI to examine fingerprinting vendor options. I also creatively identify key decision factors such as how far applicants will have to travel to get their fingerprints taken. To explain, I collected data to develop demographic maps, using MS Power BI, and analyzed the placement of vendor fingerprint locations relative to the quantity of the individuals' home address locations and applicant test centers. Expanding my knowledge of analytics software, problem solving, and Big Data will be very beneficial for implementing and supporting this new legislation.

Being identified as a top performer and high potential employee at the SCC, I was given the opportunity to become the subject matter expert for a financial audit software called TeamMate. As a result, I recently attended a TeamMate conference in Miami, Florida that focused on advanced auditing practices, training, software updates and business intelligence innovations. Much of this conference focused on the use and protection of Big Data and the most valuable insight I brought back from the conference is how important the process of data collection, protection, management, and analysis impacts business decisions and costs. I believe I will be able to develop effective programs, manage costs and mitigate risks for the SCC by applying the skills I will learn in this program.

I have been preselected to become a member and possibly a leader on the BOI's Business Intelligence Committee. This committee ensures that the BOI's technology programs support the business objectives and strategies to increase efficiency in monitoring and implementing technological advances. My role has actively increased in this committee as I have volunteered myself to present multiple scheduled training demos to teach employees best MS Power BI practices in data collection and analysis. My goal is to not only get myself up to date with advanced statistical analysis, business intelligence, and state-of-the-art technology but to teach SCC employees what I bring back from this program.

As you can see from the above, much of my education and work experience has directly involved decision analytics and I cannot see another program benefiting me better than the M.D.A. I am confident I will gain the needed decision-making skills and experience from this program to achieve my goals. Thank you for your consideration, and I welcome the opportunity to discuss with you personally how my skills and abilities can best serve VCU and the SCC.

Sincerely,

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