



October 22, 2018

To whom it may concern:

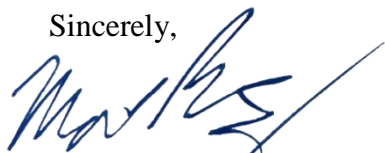
My name is Matthew Ramsey and I am an Assistant Professor in the Department of Cell and Molecular Biology at the University of Rhode Island. I am excited to support Dasith Perera's application for a URI Graduate School Enhancement of Graduate Research Award (EGRA).

Dasith began working in my laboratory two years ago and quickly established himself as a competent scientist who is highly inquisitive. I have no doubt that Dasith will be successful during his time at URI and well beyond. I hope that you will agree to support his work on this proposal.

Recently, Dasith was asked to characterize the microbiome of a bank of serum samples from type-II diabetics. This entails using DNA sequencing to determine what types of bacteria are present in each sample. We compared samples from healthy vs type-II diabetics in the hopes of finding transient oral or GI tract bacteria in the bloodstream to support several hypotheses in the field about these body sites obtaining greater entry into the circulatory system during inflammation. Surprisingly, Dasith found that a large proportion of diabetic patients had signs of bacteria from the *Acinetobacter* genus in their bloodstream. This was unanticipated and is completely unreported in the field so far. The presence of *Acinetobacter*, particularly the emerging pathogenic strains *A. baumannii* and others indicate that diabetics may harbor low levels of this organism more chronically and are at much greater risk for eventual infection. These data, if completed, provide a clear avenue for treatment recommendations and translate directly back to health benefits for millions of Americans. This proposal will help complete this ongoing project by fully assigning species-level identity to numerous *Acinetobacter*-positive samples.

I give Dasith my strongest recommendation for this award, and look forward to his continued great work on this research.

Sincerely,



Matthew Ramsey  
University of Rhode Island  
mramsey@uri.edu