



January 07, 2019

**Ford Foundation Fellowship Programs**  
500 5<sup>th</sup> St. NW  
Washington, DC 20001

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 and have been Eric Almeida's graduate advisor for the past two years. I am excited to support Eric's application for a Ford Foundation predoctoral fellowship.

Eric was given the most difficult project in my laboratory and has unwaveringly continued to generate data while developing more efficient methods of carrying out his experiments. Eric has demonstrated a rapid ability to understand and implement new molecular biology, bacterial genetics and computational techniques in my lab. He was the 1<sup>st</sup> person in my group to successfully develop genetics assay tools for his organism of interest, *Corynebacterium matruchotii*. Despite this being a difficult to work with organism, Eric's determination, quick study and perseverance has served him well and will continue to help him carry out the proposed experiments in his proposed plan of study in this application.

Eric's plan of study involves utilizing many of the genetics tools he has developed in *C. matruchotii*. I am confident that he will be able to fully achieve his goals of identifying how *C. matruchotii* interacts with other bacteria in the human oral cavity both biochemically and physically, determining how they attach to and interact with neighboring species as outlined in his research plan.

In addition to research, Eric has served as a teaching assistant for roughly half of his time in my lab. Eric has a gentle yet expressive demeanor which makes him a quite clear communicator who is very easy to approach. Since I first met Eric he has conveyed his desire to teach here at URI and beyond his graduate studies. In my opinion, Eric has the best teaching potential of any graduate student I have ever worked with or mentored. Eric has worked collaboratively with two undergraduates and one graduate student during his research so far and has been a very stable influence in the lab who has helped coordinate activities easily between others. Eric has also given research presentations to the entire department both years so far and has done quite well. His confidence and demeanor in presentations has stood well above those of his peers, even those far senior, in our department and I would rank Eric overall abilities in the top 5% of all students in our program.

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

Sincerely,

  
Matthew Ramsey  
University of Rhode Island