



November 25, 2023

To whom it may concern:

My name is Matthew Ramsey, and I am an Associate Professor in the Department of Cell and Molecular Biology at URI. It is my great pleasure to provide my highest possible recommendation for Morgan McPartland to join your PhD program. I am currently Morgan's primary advisor and mentor where she is about to enter her last semester completing a MS degree in my laboratory.

I have known Morgan for several years, starting with her time as a URI undergraduate and her work in the David Nelson lab, directly adjacent to my space. During that time, I had many scientific conversations with Morgan and could tell even as a Junior in the CMB program that Morgan was clearly thinking about research at a higher level than many of our new graduate students. Morgan had already distinguished herself from many of the other undergraduates in our labs with her fearlessness to approach faculty and ask questions. Her scientific curiosity and enthusiasm are in the top 5% of anyone I have worked with at any level in my career.

After working in industry for a short time, Morgan elected to return to URI specifically to obtain a MS degree as a springboard to working on a PhD at the highest level possible. As Morgan's advisor, I applaud her strategy in this regard and am doing my utmost to help her succeed. Morgan was clearly operating at a higher level than all but one other graduate student I have mentored thus far and was doing so far sooner than my other students. I asked Morgan why she was opting for a MS program when it was so clear that she wanted to obtain a PhD and then learned that she had struggled with grades as an undergraduate which I was surprised to learn. Morgan had been doing great in her grad classes and then I found out that she had just prior to graduate school been diagnosed with ADHD and had been successfully receiving care. Upon learning and acting on her diagnosis, Morgan's grades have vastly improved and I would urge anyone concerned about her prior grades to consider that she has successfully corrected these issues.

Unfortunately, during the time that Morgan has been in my lab, we have had to deal with a highly problematic situation. In an adjacent lab there was a graduate student that has gone through an unresolved mental health crisis. Sadly, despite pleas from myself and the students in both of our labs, the higher administration did not deal with this situation until it had become quite severe. As this person's mental health declined, they began to aggressively harass Morgan and other students which resulted in multiple lab closures to protect my students safety and ultimately ended with the harassing student being removed and banned from our building. This was a highly stressful and distracting time that affected Morgan in particular. Despite this terrible situation, Morgan continued to work even while out of the lab, stayed focused, and her enthusiasm never dwindled in the slightest. She refused to let

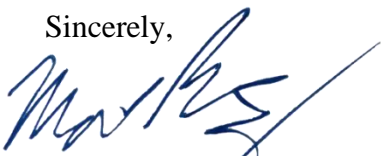
these circumstances limit her success and I greatly admire her mental willpower and resilience during this incident.

Morgan initially worked alongside a graduating PhD student and has now taken over the future direction of that project, to identify and characterize genes that render the Gram-negative opportunistic pathogen *Haemophilus parainfluenzae* sensitive to serum complement killing. Morgan has thrown herself into this project and quickly became more familiar with the literature than the graduating student was. In this regard Morgan is the best student I have ever had; she spends time in the literature and aggressively pursues leads through the papers and uses them to constantly come up with ideas and answers. Morgan will be a 1st author of the work she is currently finishing and we expect this to be published in the summer of 2024.

In the lab Morgan is incredibly meticulous and extremely well organized. She manages her time incredibly well and is already well aware of how to compartmentalize class and TA duties from research activity. Her time working in industry has also polished her professional demeanor and she approaches work in the lab as her career, and not as “school” like many early graduate students can do. Morgan is exceptionally good at working with our undergraduates in the lab, specifically asking to mentor multiple students that she has trained and turned into a group of researchers that she utilizes well in her own work. I would rate Morgan’s professionalism, work ethic and ability to work in a group setting in the top 1% of all grad students I have worked with.

I could write several pages more sharing anecdotes of why I think Morgan will be a phenomenally successful PhD student. I would love for her to join my lab, but I know she has her sights set much higher and I am happy to see someone of her talent and work ethic so motivated to achieve at as high a level as possible. Of all the students I have directly mentored, I am the most confident that Morgan will be successful. She has overcome many of the stumbling blocks that frustrate early graduate students, and she has matured beyond many of the more petty concerns that also trouble younger graduates. In my opinion, Morgan is an outstanding trainee who will work hard in your program and seek to obtain their own funding and make their own career in science. You will get her best effort and I hope that your program will give her the opportunity to. In summary, I enthusiastically give Morgan my highest possible recommendation for the PhD program and I hope you will consider her.

Sincerely,



Matthew Ramsey (he/him)
Associate Professor
University of Rhode Island
mramsey@uri.edu