

THE
UNIVERSITY
OF RHODE ISLAND

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Kingston, RI 02881

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Undergraduate Research Initiative Committee
University of Rhode Island
Kingston, RI 02881

Dear Committee Members,

I am extremely pleased to offer my support to Tala Allababidi for her undergraduate research project, "Investigating the antimicrobial activity of honeybee-derived product against the pathogenic bacteria *Francisella tularensis*".

Tala was my student in CMB211, Integrative Microbiology, during the 2019 spring semester and stood out among her peers, earning the highest grade possible ('A'). She subsequently reached out to me to gain research experience in microbiology by working in my laboratory. Over the summer, Tala began collaborating with myself and a graduate student in my laboratory. Her assigned research project focuses on characterizing several mutant bacterial strains my graduate student created, using antibiotics as a tool to probe subcellular structures.

In the course of performing her research, Tala became interested in antibiotics more generally and the potential for propolis, a compound she had used therapeutically as a child, to function as an antibiotic against the bacterial pathogen we study, *Francisella tularensis*. She independently developed and proposed the idea for a new research project based on the protocols she has mastered; this specific area of research was not under investigation in my laboratory but I enthusiastically support Tala's development and undertaking of her independent research project.

Together with my graduate students, I will supervise all the proposed work in this project to ensure safety, rigor, and reproducibility. The success of this project will be based on Tala's ability to (i) learn and implement research protocols, (ii) critically analyze the resulting data, (iii) make connections between the resulting data and the current scientific literature, and (iv) effectively communicate her research findings, both within and outside our research group.

Tala is an outstanding student with great enthusiasm for laboratory research. She is well-prepared to carry out the proposed experiments and I support Tala's application for an undergraduate grant for original student research without reservation and with enthusiasm.

Sincerely,



Kathryn M. Ramsey, PhD