

Intellectual Merit Criterion

Overall Assessment of Intellectual Merit

Excellent

Explanation to Applicant

I found this application quite compelling. The applicant has taken a non-traditional path through formal education, initially struggling academically but ultimately developing into quite a good and dependable student. The applicant demonstrates a fine grasp of how a scientific research project works, including the higher-order or less obvious challenges of obtaining materials, developing collaborations, etc... in addition to the technical/lab/field/bench challenges that most applicants will understand. Early academic struggles/concepts can clearly be reinforced based on later performance/competence. I find no weaknesses.

Broader Impacts Criterion

Overall Assessment of Broader Impacts

Excellent

Explanation to Applicant

The applicant was challenged academically by an unstable early life, which caused true academic development to occur later in life than is typical for excellent applicants. However, the applicant has developed a strong level of empathy and understanding which has allowed them to demonstrate how they can 'pay forward' the support that they have received (not just that they will pay it forward). A development of diverse expertise ranging from coding related to video games, to music, and finally within biology (genomics and bioinformatics) makes this applicant really interesting. The unanticipated benefits of these diverse interests make this applicant a strong candidate for support. I find no weaknesses.

Summary Comments

I really appreciated this application. This applicant was able to persist despite early challenges, attach themselves to different interests in an attempt to 'find themselves', stick with academic interests despite initial stumbles, and finally emerge as a strong academic and professional candidate. I find them worthy of support.

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Explanation to Applicant

The applicant has a varied and diverse work experience. Respectable GPA at a difficult school (UM). Applicant has overcome a lot and has accomplished more than most with less resources. They provide a well-written project that is feasible with clear questions and hypotheses. Their application is well-written and well thought-out. They are buoyed by good past and future mentors who should ensure the completion of the work.

Broader Impacts Criterion

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Explanation to Applicant

Specific aims to design exhibits and produce publicly accessible data to move the field forward. Specific assessment will be used

to gauge impact of said exhibit. Student has been involved and engaged and likely will continue this pattern to be successful in both research and engagement to public stakeholders.

Summary Comments

This is an excellent proposal that demonstrates scientific thought and experimental design. I find the student highly likely to succeed as a grad student and their research has the potential to advance the field on several fronts.

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Explanation to Applicant

You have demonstrated great potential to plan and conduct important evolutionary research and communicate research results. You have designed a very interested research project.

Broader Impacts Criterion

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Explanation to Applicant

The broader impacts described in the application are impressive and relevant particularly as they pertain to increasing public scientific literacy.

Summary Comments

You have demonstrated persistence, a deep interest in science, and great promise to be a successful graduate student and future scientist.