

To Whom It May Concern:

It brings me great pleasure to write of my time spent working under the mentorship of Lauren Fink. Ever since I met Lauren four years ago, she has been an invaluable source of guidance and inspiration to me as I navigate my own educational and professional goals.

I first became acquainted with Lauren through the UC Davis Undergraduate Research Mentorship Program, which pairs undergraduate students with graduate student mentors in their fields of interest. When I was paired up with Lauren, I was a sophomore psychology student full of questions and uncertainty. I had never worked in a lab before, knew nothing about being involved in research, and was still very unsure of my own interests and future goals. All I knew was that I had a desire to learn more about what it meant to conduct research, and Lauren welcomed my interest by sharing her expertise, connecting me to resources, supporting me in an exploration of my own interests, and ultimately expanding my perception of what I thought was achievable for myself.

As a mentor, Lauren guided me through my first immersive introduction into empirical research and scientific talk, exposing me to the scientific methods available and extant literature in the neuroscience/music niche. Throughout the process, she managed to explain even the most complex theories and methodologies in an intuitive and approachable way. Not once did Lauren make me feel like my questions were a burden to her. This was so meaningful to me. I knew that I could come to her with any concerns or confusion I had, and her guidance in helping me to understand unfamiliar concepts was always enthusiastic and effective. When I began working as a research assistant under her supervision in the Janata Lab at the UC Davis Center for Mind and Brain, I appreciated how she patiently took the time to explain the science underlying the components of the lab's research projects, allowing me to feel engaged and involved in every aspect as I helped collect data and interact with participants.

Beyond this, Lauren helped foster my own personal and professional growth by connecting me to opportunities and experiences that I otherwise would have had limited visibility to. She bolstered my confidence in the research setting by including me in her lab's journal clubs and inviting me to attend conference presentations or guest speaker events. When I began to develop an interest in pursuing psychology in a clinical setting, she even helped me draft a cover letter and professional resume that allowed me to secure a summer research opportunity in my hometown. She consistently made sure to inform me of any relevant workshops and events that could further my professional development or prepare me for future graduate studies. As an undergraduate student still figuring out my professional goals, I felt incredibly lucky to have this "safe" space in which I could share both my interests as well as my uncertainties, gain new skills, make mistakes, and grow as a student and researcher under Lauren's guidance.

I am grateful for the chance to write this letter, as I feel it gives me the opportunity to properly begin to thank Lauren for the integral role she has played in my academic development, even to this day. It was Lauren's mentorship and core foundation in the scientific method that gave me the confidence to take on more involved roles in research settings as my college career, and subsequently, my own interests, continued to develop. Four years have passed since I first met Lauren, and I now work as a full-time laboratory manager and professional researcher, enthusiastically applying to doctoral programs in psychology. I am certain that I would not be where I am today without having known Lauren. It was truly a highlight of my undergraduate career to be paired with her as my mentor. Her dedication as a mentor is indisputable, and it is not only her obvious expertise but also her empathetic nature that allows her to bring out the fullest potential in her students and mentees. I look forward to seeing where her path continues to take her, as I know she will continue to positively impact other students in the same way that she has impacted me.

Sincerely,

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