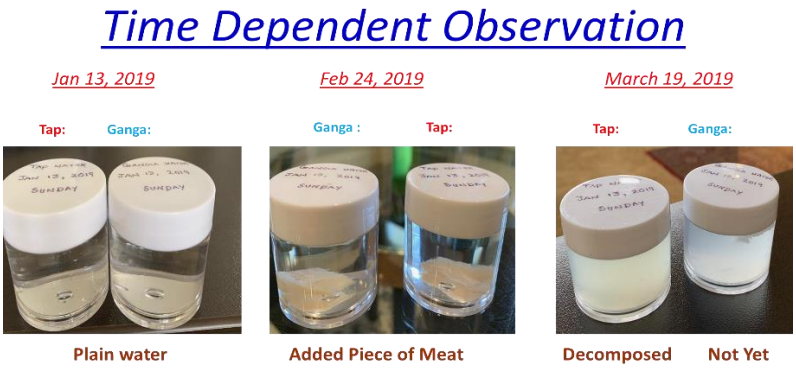
Dear Undergraduate Admissions Committee,

It is with great pleasure that I write this letter of recommendation for Ms. Driti Rajkumar. I am a senior member of the research community at AbbVie and a Clinical Professor of Neurology in the School of Medicine at the University of California, Irvine.

I have known Ms. Rajkumar for approximately five months as a research mentor at AbbVie while she was a summer intern between June and August 2025, and have continued to review her research progress since then. During this time, we had the opportunity to discuss her research history and future aspirations.

She is an exceptional student and has great promise as both a scientist and a contributor to society. She has exceptional curiosity and initiative, with scientific acumen, critical analytical and communication skills that exceed many of the post-doctoral students I have encountered.

Ms. Rajkumar recalled that her interest in science began when she was ten years old. While visiting Rishikesh, India, she was intrigued by the Ganges River's apparent antibacterial properties. She devised a simple tabletop kitchen experiment to explore the potential for microbiological growth in two containers (see Figure below). The experiment was conducted at room temperature, with the samples inoculated with a small piece of meat. After three months, the faucet water became hazier than that from the Ganga River, suggesting an inhibition of bacterial growth in the Ganga water. Though conducted outside a laboratory setting, this early experiment reflected her natural scientific curiosity and commitment to discovery.



Years later, in high school, she joined Professor Eric Pearlman's laboratory at the University of California, Irvine, where she investigated the synergistic effects of bacteriophages and antibiotics in inhibiting *Pseudomonas aeruginosa*, a highly virulent and antibiotic-resistant pathogen. Remarkably, she validated the antibacterial activity of bacteriophages from the Ganges against *Pseudomonas* in a BSL-2 laboratory and initiated bioinformatics work to re-engineer phages for therapeutic use. The implications of this research are profound and medically significant.

Ms. Rajkumar's findings have earned her an invitation to present at the International Bacteriophage Conference in November 2025, and to speak at the Southern California Pharmaceutical Discussion Group. Her accomplishments have been recognized through numerous honors, including the Ricoh Biomedical Sustainable Development Award, the Arnold and Mabel Beckman Chapman Award, First Place in Microbiology & Cell Biology (OCSEF), CSEF Finalist, the Irvine Ranch Water District Award, and the California State Assembly Certificate for Science Achievement. She is also the only two-time recipient of the Carson Scholarship at Portola High School.

This summer, while at AbbVie, she learned about preclinical research and toxicology. Although not permitted to work in our regulated laboratories given her age, she was engaged in non-bench activities. Furthermore, she took the extra steps to meet with many of our scientists across various functions, including those in neuroscience and dermatological sciences.

Beyond these scientific achievements and marked future potential, she is creative, resilient and connects innovation with social and society impact. She is enthusiastic about research because she knows that people can benefit from her discoveries. And, her enthusiasm is a wonderful balance of maturity–quite infectious but not overbearing. These qualities reflect one who will become a significant contributor to our society.

I have complete confidence in Ms. Rajkumar's ability to excel in your undergraduate program and to make meaningful contributions to both science and society. She earns my highest recommendation without reservation. I look forward to witnessing her continued success and the positive impact she will undoubtedly make in the scientific community.

Most sincerely,

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