

Samples for the Macaulay Opportunities Fund Statement of Justification Essay

Spring 2023

The following essays are written by past Macaulay students, and were top-scoring picks for competitive Enhanced Opportunities Funds. Identifying information has been redacted to protect students' privacy.

Statement of Justification essays are evaluated on:

- **Consistency.** Make a solid, consistent argument as to why this activity will help you meet your goals.
- **Appeal to the audience.** Let the reader know why these goals are important to you and to the world around you. Use language that is engaging and interesting.
- **Support of evidence.** Claims should be supported by evidence. This does not need to be cited, as in an academic paper. But a statement about yourself, the activity, or anything else should be backed up by your experiences or necessary information.
- **Writing mechanics.** Spelling, grammar, formatting, and clarity of language count. Be sure to proofread, and/or seek writing assistance.
- **Grant-specific aspects.** Some Enhanced Grants ask for specific information in addition to the general essay prompt. Let the reader know why you're a good fit for this grant in particular.

Please keep in mind that these examples are not perfect, yet they still scored well and qualified their authors for enhanced grants. If you spot mistakes, try to focus more on what the essay did well than what it did wrong.

Please also keep in mind that every student's circumstances are different, and some essay prompts value specific information that may not be represented in the following examples. Rather than paraphrasing or even copying these samples, work closely with your advisor to compose the best statement possible.

Essay 1

Study Abroad in Greece, International Journalism and Immigration Focus

A very clear claim is made that the student's future work would have an impact on international journalism regarding the refugee crises. That claim is soundly supported by details from the student's experiences and future goals and tied to specific aims and activities of the study abroad program.

Opportunities Fund Essay

In September of 2015, a two-year-old boy was photographed face down on the coastline of a Turkish beach. His name was Alan Kurdi. Though this was not known until later. When first accounts of his name were revealed to the public, he was known as Aylan. It was not until his aunt, Tima Kurdi, clarified that his name was Alan. He had died while he and his Syrian family were attempting to seek refuge on the Greek island of Kos. But until his aunt spoke out, he was just the boy on the beach seen by millions, lacking a story.

Media pervading the refugee crisis is laden with sensationalism, seeking to attain a reaction. The truth is often lost amid the noise. The Immigration, Citizenship, and Nationalism program in Greece seeks to ascertain those truths through lectures and fieldwork. Through the CUNY Baccalaureate School for Unique and Interdisciplinary Studies, I study Global Political Media, a self-devised program seeking to understand the political power of the media—how each informational medium informs social and political thought throughout the public. This course supplies the information from which media stem. Understanding the political and social climate of many migrants' first steps on European soil will prime me to write and report as a journalist on the truths of refugee crises—not through sensationalism, but through conversations with the people involved. Through my journalism, I will be able to teach a civic education, building the global consciousness of burgeoning civic agents.

The class is divided into three segments: a lecture portion and two “expanded educational experiences.” My experiences in classes like The Ethical Dimensions of International Relations and Humanitarian Intervention have provided me with the foundations to understand the global

response to international crises such as that in Syria. This course will localize and provide a more in-depth understanding of the Greek side of the crisis. It will introduce me to the history and politics of Greece and how they play into the crisis itself. From these classes, I am familiar with the conflict, its actors, and its history. This course will show me another side, the receiving side of the migration. The lectures and readings will provide me with the information necessary to write about the refugee crisis—and any crisis—not from a solely subjective standpoint. Knowing the facts of Greece as it receives refugees will increase the credibility of my writing and further understanding of the complexities of Mediterranean migration.

The first of the expanded educational experiences is constructed so that students can learn about *and* from the immigrant and refugee communities we study. We will be working in the field with governmental and non-governmental organizations that aid refugees and economic migrants. The broad scope of the communities provides an even broader set of perspectives from which to learn. Working with both the migrants and the organizations that work with them, I will be straddling a space on which there is little discussion: the interactions between communities in need and the organizations sent to help them. In immersing myself in these interactions, I will be a third party, able to critically judge the genuineness of these interactions. Are the refugees' needs being fulfilled the way that they would like them to be? Or are the organizations further impinging on their already marginalized lifestyles by evading cultural sensitivity? My direct work with the groups involved in the migration process will only further inform my writing, providing the emotional appeal necessary. Knowing how the migrants feel and why, I can provide a more valid account of their experiences.

The third segment of study involves a series of historical visits. Much of this would be primarily to enrich our experiences as students abroad. I see the historical visits as more:

monuments like the Acropolis are symbols of the magnanimity of the Ancient Greek civilization, a society spanning from Africa to Europe and Asia. The multiculturalism prevalent today—though a product largely of turmoil—is reminiscent of the pluralism of the Greek Empire. In underscoring these circumstances, I hope to convince that they are not all too different from those throughout the ancient European history valued throughout the world.

I wish for my journalism to inform, to educate the population of content that is likely absent from the classroom. Alan Kurdi's family's story was told for them. Their voice was stolen, and the mainstream media imposed their own accent, refusing to listen, let alone amplify. Through this experience, in conjunction with my Global Political Media major, I can begin to recognize my Western biases toward Mediterranean migration. As a professional journalist, I hope to be able to provide accurate, founded accounts of what is actually happening, to whom, by whom, and why.

I can only hope that the Syrian refugee crisis will end as I enter adulthood. As I grow older, I will write more and more, seeking to unearth more truths lost when talking about brown and black peoples moving about the world, solely seeking stability. As a writer, I will build on my experiences like those in Greece. I would hope to serve as a foundation for what writing on communities that are not yours should look like. I want my writing to make an impact, as media on global issues informs students across the world on global consciousness. If the information is not correct, their thoughts, ideas, and beliefs can be skewed. I hope to take part in telling the truth.

Essay 2

Study Abroad in Cambodia, Child Neurology Focus

The student draws a through-line from past experience to the study abroad in Cambodia, to career goals. Supporting details are infused with the student's sense of compassion.

All humans really want is someone who can listen to them, acknowledge their pain, and be there to empathize and support them. Through my work with children with autism and their families, and my work abroad in Pakistan, I have aspired to be this individual for people I have met along the way. My major in neuroscience and psychology; my research at Teachers College Columbia's cerebral palsy summer camps; and my role as a Registered Behavior Technician at the campus autism clinic have confirmed my passion to help individuals whom society has labeled as "different". In Pakistan, I worked on a country-wide project with a nongovernmental organization to destigmatize mental health and empower individuals with mental health disorders. I hope to further this work by meeting and listening to victims of genocide in Cambodia. This opportunity will allow me to work with trauma survivors and develop into a more empathetic and culturally sensitive mental health professional.

I am committed to being an advocate and healthcare professional that can listen, acknowledge, and support individuals who are suffering as a result of societal structures and psychological differences. These individuals need someone to normalize their distress by letting them know that they are not alone, what they are experiencing is normal, and—most importantly—that it is not their fault. In addition to policy and cultural changes, they need people in their lives who will help them learn effective coping strategies and empathize with them regardless of their background, ethnicity, or experiences. They need to know they are more than a label. My mission so far has been to give everyone I've worked with the most positive experience possible so that they are likely to seek help as needed in the future.

I've always felt the need to make others around me happy—happier than before I walked into the room. This innate driving force has led me to pursue service projects and ultimately pursue the neuroscience and psychology major and the clinical psychology profession. Whether it was 7 year old Maria selling chocolate at her mosque's doorstep for charity; 10 year old Maria working with her

local dentist to sell toothbrushes in her Corona neighborhood to raise money for oral hygiene in Ghana; 14 year old Maria convincing her parents she needs 100 pairs of Toms just because for each pair she buys the company will give a pair to someone in need; or 19 year old Maria who embarked on a daunting journey to Pakistan to be an advocate for mental health, I made a small impact on the world. These experiences also changed me and further confirmed that my purpose in life would be to strive to better people's lives. My love for people and my passion to change the world led me to the combined neuroscience and psychology major—an ideal way to explore human behavior.

Along the way, I took on a number of volunteer positions to help me continue doing what I love—making a small impact on the world. While working in a research lab devoted to children with autism, I spent half my time working directly with the child with autism and the other half working with their families. In interviews, I would learn all about the family, and I would come up with a plan to help the family communicate and manage their stress better. I loved this part: it was like problem solving. Families of kids with autism are often overworked and stressed. I worked closely with my mentors and professors to help create semester-long family plans, detailing how we could help with sibling relations and parent-child interactions. My favorite and most memorable part was to see two siblings—who would initially not interact in any way—come into the clinic one morning holding hands. After sessions of administering behavioral skills training to the typically developing sibling, I felt accomplished! I now work as a Registered Behavior Technician with children with autism and their families to implement intervention in homes and schools.

I chose the Human Rights and Transitional Justice in Post-Genocide Cambodia program for Winter 2018. Advocating for the rights for people recovering from trauma, this program best aligns with my career and professional goals. It builds on my prior experience as an advocate for vulnerable populations. Last summer, I presented and delivered speeches in psychiatric wards across Pakistan, working with a nongovernmental organization, to change the conversation on mental

health. We traveled from city to city and visited rural villages, holding free public workshops and distributing pamphlets, in an effort to educate people that mental health is beyond one's control and is not a moral failing. To be able to change the way people with disabilities see the world, we were working to change how the world sees them.

Changing societal perspectives is also important for survivors in Cambodia. In this study abroad program, I will work to help trauma survivors to seek closure, as they fight for justice, seek truth, and work for acknowledgement of the human rights abuses they suffered. 43 years later, Cambodia is a place where personal memories of the genocide are politicized and impunity remains strong, making it extremely difficult for victims to move forward with their lives and seek closure. These individuals must be acknowledged by their society and their country for all they have endured. My mission for this trip would not be just to conduct interviews, collect data, build teamwork and collaboration skills while studying the justice models being used to address human rights abuses caused by the Pol Pot regime, but it would be to assure individuals they are heard and supported.

As an aspiring clinical psychologist and advocate for human rights, this experience will truly change my life. To be able to work with an organization that seeks justice and a safe nation for all, I will deepen my understanding of the unique issues that trauma survivors face. As a future clinical psychologist, I will be able to learn from this experience and better serve refugees, individuals seeking asylum, and other individuals seeking help to cope with trauma. I hope to be step outside of my comfort zone by stepping into a land where individuals struggle to have basic human rights acknowledged. I know that this experience will give me a deeper perspective and will pave the way to becoming a well-trained, culturally sensitive, and passionate clinical psychologist doing human rights work.

Essay 3

Study Abroad in France, Creative Writing Focus

Because writing and language were a specific focus of this scholarship, it was important that the student clearly tied their Creative Writing major to the literary focus of the activity.

Macaulay Honors College at [REDACTED] CUNY Class of 2019

Opportunities Fund Essay

Adam Dayan Scholarship

In my sophomore year of college, I was introduced to Nigerian writer Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's TEDTalk called The Danger of a Single Story. In the moving twenty-minute monologue, Adichie discussed the power of the written language, as well as the dangers of a particular group of people being reduced to a single narrative. Adichie contended that every human life was compiled of innumerable stories, and reducing people to just one story, the single story, was equivalent to snatching away their humanity. She told me that the responsibility of writers was to immerse ourselves in the cultures of others, to listen, to understand to the best of our abilities, to tell these stories, the ones that give people their humanities back. She told me to tell stories that give people who live in poverty narratives that make them whole and complete, stories of other aspects of their lives besides their poverty, the stories that give African children voices without reducing them to solely wide-eyed, hungry children in hovels with flies on their faces. I listened to Adichie beseech writers to tell colorful stories, complete stories. It was a call to action. As a result, later that semester, I declared my major as Creative Writing.

Creative writing has been one of my passions since the fourth grade. I read my first Roald Dahl book, *Danny, the Champion of the World*, from cover to cover in one sitting. When I finished it, I got my own notebook and began to write my own story, a father-daughter story, similar to the one that Dahl had branded into my brain, called *Walking on the Savannah*. It was terrible.

I was soon introduced to Harry Potter, and I realized that I didn't have to stay grounded in reality--I could come up with bippity boppity boops and dragons and Voldemorts of my own. I began to fill notebook upon notebook with my writing; I published my stories online, I asked my own father, a writer, for criticism. I got to high school and made it my mission to read every single classic on the classics shelf at my local library, and it took me two years, but I did it. I let Salinger and Hemingway and Steinbeck and Lee and Vonnegut take a hold of me, and I moved from notebooks to the clunkiest Macbook you've ever seen to do my writing. I typed furiously daily, I created, I tried to move with my words, to spark a brain, to make somebody shiver.

I try to learn as much as I can about other cultures, people, places, to not only make my writing more real, but to broaden my own reality and cultural awareness. In that vein, I would like to take my winter break to travel to Paris in pursuit of CIEE's Urban Studies and Parisian Literature comprehensive course this coming January. The program is one designed to immerse students into literature and French culture and teach multiple stories about France.

When I finished reading the classics at my library, it occurred to me that there hadn't been many black authors taking up space on the shelf. Instead, many great works by black authors were given a separate category, *African-American Literature*, not allowed a place in the American canon. It was on this shelf that I was given words of representation, pride, consciousness, revolution. The work of some of the greatest black writers the world has ever seen sat on that shelf, and those authors have made themselves at home in Paris and produced literature that has empowered me as a young black woman. The city of lights is unique in its literary tradition and legacy as a safe haven for black artists, specifically writers. The words of Langston Hughes, Claude McKay, and Richard Wright, all of whom lived in Paris, have always

prompted my celebration and admiration of their grit, honesty, and refusal to tell a single story, or allow themselves to be reduced to one.

James Baldwin has always been my favorite. All of his work, from *A Fire Next Time* to *Giovanni's Room*, have always sparked my brain, and Paris was often the inspiration for his words. He had always been an unflinching, unapologetic, and uncompromising black man and author, and Paris welcomed him when his own country pushed him away due to its recurring history of blatant racism and police brutality. The honesty and eloquence he implores in his writing both fills me with awe and galvanizes me into writing my own blackness unto the page as he did. Being surrounded by the memories and impacts of writers who have left behind legacies of their complete stories has always been one of my lifetime dreams, and CIEE's program sets this dream in motion, both encouraging me to explore and cultivate my own literary talent as well as the rich culture and history that Paris provides.

I've never been to Europe at all, and to go to the city that is known for its black literary traditions and legends is important to me. After graduation, I plan on going to law school for civil rights law, and the words of the black authors I read undoubtedly shaped my decision to dedicate my life to the uplifting and granting of justice to the disenfranchised. The Adam Dayans scholarship will allow me to immerse myself in a culture unknown to me, to see things from a different point of view, and to learn things from this new environment, both in and out of the classroom. Being in Paris will spur me to pursue creative projects of my own, specifically working on the portfolio of short stories I have been developing, as well as cultivating my growing love for photography. It should be the goal of every writer to tell a story that rings true, and I would want nothing more than to be able to do so.

Essay 4

Internship at a Visual Arts Library

The student effectively shows the impact the internship will have on their plans in the visual arts industry. Because the application is for reimbursement, they can draw on specifically impactful experiences they have already had.

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] College

Class of 2019

I am [REDACTED], a student in the Macaulay Honors College at [REDACTED] College majoring in Classical Studies and Art History with an expected graduation date of May 2019. I am seeking a general grant for reimbursement for my part-time summer 2018 internship in the Frick Art Reference Library Photoarchive department. I am also applying for the May and Samuel Rudin Family Foundation Opportunities Fund.

I have long been interested in pursuing a career in the arts. Before my summer internship at the Frick Art Reference Library, I had unpaid internships in two other art institutions in New York City, Art in General and WhiteBox. Through these experiences, I gained exposure to several areas of the art world, including curation and publication. My internship at WhiteBox first encouraged my interest in the field of archiving. Toward the end of my time there, I began working with my supervisor to organize and catalogue a box of photographic slides from exhibitions the organization held in the late 1990s and early 2000s. I found the process of digitizing and archiving photographic material fascinating, and I became interested in exploring the field of photo-archiving in greater depth. When I found out about the Photoarchive Internship at the Frick, I knew it would give me the perfect opportunity to do so.

Several factors made the Frick Art Reference Library the ideal institution for my summer internship. For one, I have been entranced by the Frick Collection and Art Reference Library since my fourth Macaulay Seminar, Shaping the Future of New York City. My professor, Dr. [REDACTED] [REDACTED], discussed the history of New York as well as its future, and I left the class fascinated with Gilded Age New York, a period the Frick Collection perfectly encapsulates in its architecture

and collection. When I applied for the Photoarchive Internship, I was ecstatic at the opportunity to intern in such a gorgeous and historically significant institution. The Frick Art Reference Library Photoarchive also resonated with me. Founded by Helen Clay Frick in the early 20th Century, the Photoarchive was dedicated to supporting the study of art history by scholars financially unable to travel to see artwork. Accessibility in the arts is an important subject to me, and a cause I hope to support this year as an Arts Ambassador to the [REDACTED] College Office of the Arts. I was thrilled to work with a collection that was devoted to the cause of widening access to the study of Art History.

The duties I performed as a Photoarchive Intern exposed me to many aspects of museum and art library work. During my internship, I assisted with the ongoing digitization of the Frick Art Reference Library Photoarchive. One task I performed was digitizing the card catalogue to the Photoarchive using a scanner. Another was collecting, organizing, and barcoding photographs in the Photoarchive to prepare them for in-house digitization. One particularly enjoyable task was creating mylar encapsulation sleeves, which are used to protect photographs, using an ultrasonic welder. While these jobs were at times mundane, they allowed me to see many different sides of the field of Library Science. I regularly interacted with Frick employees from the conservation, research, photoarchive, and reference library departments. Having never worked in a library, this experience gave me a comprehensive look at the environment I hope to one day be employed in. I also had the privilege of visiting several other institutions during my internship, including Christie's Auction House, the Morgan Library & Museum, and the Metropolitan Museum of Art. No other internship would have given me such an in-depth look into the field of Library Science or work in the arts more generally.

My internship at the Frick Art Reference Library also connected with my academic background. The underpinning of my undergraduate studies at [REDACTED] has been forming skills in

research, visual analysis, and writing. In Classical Studies, I have developed these skills by writing a thesis on women's participation in religion in Roman Egypt and as a Bluhm Scholar, a program which allowed me the opportunity to spend January 2018 travelling in Greece. In Art History, I best demonstrated my abilities in these categories in a challenging course on research methods in the study of Mexican Modernist Art. I have long known that I wanted to pursue a career in the arts, to best capitalize on these skills, but until my internship at the Frick I was unsure how to move forward. At the Frick, I interacted with many librarians and archivists who shared similar backgrounds in the humanities and whose proudest achievements were their research and writing skills and visual acuity. Following their example, I now intend to further my education by pursuing a Masters Degree in Library and Information Science with a certificate in Archiving.

As a Photoarchive Intern in the Frick Art Reference Library, I gained experience in archiving that will contribute to my undergraduate studies and future career and make me a more competitive graduate school applicant. Interning at the Frick gave me a comprehensive look at the entire process of archiving a photographic archive, from organizing and barcoding to digitization and using a database. Thanks to my internship at the Frick, I feel certain that a career as an archivist will perfectly suit my interests and academic background. I also feel confident that my internship at the Frick, a world-renowned museum and center for research, will reflect my dedicated interest in archiving and positively effect my applications to graduate school. The influence of my Photoarchive Internship at the Frick Art Reference Library on my undergraduate studies and professional and academic future is clear. Receiving reimbursement from the Macaulay Honors College or the May and Samuel Rudin Family Foundation Opportunities Fund would reward my effort and commitment to my future and help financially support my future studies.

Essay 5

Research in Neuroscience

This Enhanced Grant had a focus on pre-med research. Students are required to effectively show that their activity will contribute to their plan of studying medicine, which this essay does well.

Statement of Justification

I began working in Dr. [REDACTED]'s Neuroscience Lab in the summer of 2017. I am a Psychology major and on a Pre-Medical track, so I knew I would want to partake in research, especially Psychology/Neuroscience research. Dr. [REDACTED]'s research was most appealing to me because it is centered around the African naked mole-rat. This research is cutting-edge because naked mole-rats are extremely unique and interesting animals that can teach us many things about themselves, other mammals, and ourselves. I also began working in the lab because of its location in my campus at the [REDACTED]. It is a convenient location for me, allowing me to both attend classes and work in the research lab. This allows me to spend a maximum amount of time at the lab without interfering with my classes and studying.

The research project I will be working on in Dr. [REDACTED]'s lab will be dealing with monitoring and manipulating carbon dioxide (CO₂) levels in the naked mole-rat colonies. Naked mole-rats are able to tolerate hypoxic environments and abnormally high levels of CO₂, levels that would cause other mammals to pass out or even die. The goal of this research is to determine whether the naked mole-rats gather in response to the high levels of CO₂ or if they simply tolerate these high levels in order to be close together because they are such highly social animals. I will be using an Arduino computer and coding it to enable it to open and close a gas valve connected to a CO₂ tank. If the CO₂ levels drop below a certain level, the valve will open. The valve will close when this level is attained. I will then determine if the naked mole-rats spend more time in this manipulated chamber, thereby determining if they are attracted to the CO₂.

The research I have done and will be doing in Dr. [REDACTED]'s lab is relevant to my course of study as a psychology major and enriches my understanding of what I learn in my

college coursework. Being a psychology major, I am very interested in the brain, but also in behavior and the meaning behind that behavior. I am fascinated with understanding why people do the things they do. This fascination led me to want to become a psychology major in the first place and to start working in a neuroscience/psychology lab. Working in a lab that has both a neuroscience and a psychology focus is important to me because I can be exposed to the physiological aspect of psychology and also the tangible, behavioral aspect of psychology. I can apply the behavioral, cognitive, social, and physiological psychology that I learn in my coursework as a psychology major to my research in the lab. The naked mole-rats are an excellent model to compare to human behavior and can elucidate many things about other mammals. They are highly social animals, and this eusociality is the subject of many of the research projects in the lab. I am able to better understand what I have learned in my classes covering behavioral, cognitive, and social psychology when observing the naked mole-rats' behavior.

My work as a research assistant in a neuroscience/psychology lab is also influential and relevant to my future goals of going to medical school and becoming a doctor. Throughout my life, I have always had a profound love of science and thirst for knowledge. My desire to go into a career that enables me to partake in lifelong learning is one of the reasons I want to become a doctor. Learning new things and making new discoveries has fueled me in my pre-medical journey and working in a research lab enables me to take a direct part in the scientific method. This is directly related to my professional aspiration of a career in medicine because a doctor also uses the scientific method. In the research lab, I must formulate a hypothesis and test that hypothesis in order to find out if that hypothesis is correct. A doctor must use these same skills, examining a patient and formulating a hypothesis on what condition the patient may have. The

doctor must then order tests to determine if her hypothesis is correct. Understanding more about the process of formulating hypotheses and investigating them will enhance my learning experience and help me develop skills that will benefit me in my future career as a physician. Being able to clinically apply my research findings demonstrates that medicine is prefaced on research, and experience in a research lab can be extremely useful for a career in medicine. For example, the brain mechanisms that enable the naked mole-rats to tolerate such high CO₂ levels can be applicable as possible treatments for similar conditions of low oxygen in humans, such as stroke. My background as a psychology major and my subsequent work in a psychology research lab will also be extremely useful for a career in medicine because the future of medicine is leaning towards the biopsychosocial approach. Many doctors are beginning to consider the social and psychological factors affecting the patient, as these factors may be contributing to the patient's condition. A background in psychology and work in a psychology research lab, which increases my understanding of psychology, can be beneficial to me in this approach to medicine, enabling me to fundamentally understand the roots of a patient's sickness and to one day become the best doctor I can be.

To that end, I have had a pre-health plan to prepare me for medical school. I maintained a 3.9 overall GPA throughout college and scored a 518 (96th percentile) on my MCAT. I worked hard in order to receive the best scores I possibly could, which makes my application competitive when I am applying to medical schools. In addition to academic achievements, I have volunteered at Staten Island University Hospital Emergency Department and shadowed several doctors. This has given me increased clinical exposure and an intimate view of the many duties of a physician. I also met with the Pre-Medical Advisory Committee at CSI and was interviewed by the committee in order to receive feedback from them and to obtain a committee letter for

medical school. I have applied to medical school and am now actively engaged in the interview process. My research fits into my pre-health plan because it has strengthened many of the skills I will need for a career in medicine. Working in the animal facility with the naked mole-rats and observing their behavior and recording what I observe has strengthened my observational skills, which will be valuable to me as a physician. As a doctor, I will have to possess strong observational skills in order to observe and examine each patient and analyze what these observations mean. Working on a research team has also strengthened my teamwork skills. This translates to the teamwork skills I will need to work on a medical team and to function efficiently in a hospital setting. Taking orders in the lab as well as working on my own research project with a team has taught me how to take direction and how to function as a leader, skills which are vital for a career in medicine. The Opportunities Fund would be extremely useful to me as it would enable me to continue working in the research lab, which will better prepare me for my future medical career.