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Dear Screening Committee:

For all of his academic and athletic recognition thus far, *First Name Last Name* is a model of humility. He is proud of his accomplishments, but sees himself, and everything he does, as part of a bigger picture. When he was awarded a xxxxxxxxxxxx Scholarship, for example, the school newspaper noted that *First Name* was instrumental in Rutgers being named to the national All-Academic Track and Field Team. About that collective honor for his team, *First Name* said, “Personally, the xxxxxxxxxxxx is great, but to know that the whole team is doing really well academically—that’s even more rewarding for me to be a part of.” *First Name* is remarkable for the joy he takes in the accomplishments of others, the honest pleasure he has in participating with them, and the humility he exhibits in the round of applause.

Born in Russia, *First Name* spent his childhood in Israel before his family moved to Mississippi, and then to New Jersey. In his short life he has attended thirteen different schools. These places have all influenced the way he sees the world. As a boy, he experienced Israel as a more communal culture, with emphasis on establishing social connections with all people around him; as an adult, he experiences the United States as a culture which promotes and rewards individuals, and which values the nuclear family as the foundational social unit. He sees worth in both cultural attitudes, and as a citizen in the US now, with its intense focus on individualism, one of his goals is to retain his sense of community, of social commitment. Bringing together these two ways of being—socially bonded and individually successful—he asks of himself: “How can I make this into a wholesome story?”

First Name is incredibly comfortable in his skin, and that comfort comes across as openness, curiosity, calm, centeredness. Even when he is being interviewed—presumably to talk about himself—he appears to be listening more than talking. I surmise that this quality is at the root of his scientific intelligence. He is an observer, a thinker, comfortable with the ignorance that precedes insight. The discovery *First Name* made while working for Amicus Therapeutics came about because he continued to ask questions about methodology well into the experiment; rather than resting content with the successful results, he continued to probe: this is a fine way to gather information, but is there something we are missing even in our success? There was. The holy grail of scientific research may be getting promising results, but *First Name’s* experiences in the lab have rewarded him for focusing not only on results, but on continually questioning and improving the methodologies that may generate them.

First Name’s goal in graduate work is to continue embracing broad questions of methodology within the many fields of materials science: stem-cell biology, bio-material synthesis,

computational modeling and analysis, and biomedical imaging. *First Name* values the promise of scientific application of his research and discoveries in the field of medicine. He is also aware of the challenges to funding the kind of breakthrough research that could make a dramatic difference. The current system of funding cannot support revolutionary projects, and these are what *First Name* believes will be needed to push cancer care beyond incremental progress. He hopes to provide medical applications where they do not exist today, for example, offering improvements to cancer diagnostics through computational modeling. Grand ambitions in a young scientist and in *First Name*, they are coupled with a humanness, even a graciousness about what he may be able to do.

As smart and modest as he is, *First Name's* most prominent characteristic may be empathy. Born, I suspect, from the experience of losing his father one month into freshman year, he does not bear that loss three years later as a wound, but as a source of strength. He clearly misses his father, a powerful and warm presence in his life. But *First Name* has not taken on that absence as a burden, but as motivation. Indeed it is more than his father's death that motivates *First Name*; it is his father's life. *First Name's* sense of purpose was born not in the face of loss, but long before in the presence of fullness. *First Name's* father introduced him to the joys of discovery through play, and these evening father-son-daughter work-as-play sessions were *First Name's* introduction to visual imaging of structural changes. Long before his father died, *First Name* associated scientific discovery and learning with fulfillment and optimism, a world-view in which change is possible and good, despite unexpected and difficult turns.

First Name has always participated fully in the Rutgers community, even more impressive given that he has commuted from home three of his four years. After his father died, *First Name* remained on-campus for his freshman year, but following that, moved back home to support, and to be with, his mother. Despite the distance from his peers and the life of the Rutgers campus, his involvement in academic and extracurricular activities only increased. He has combined broad, deep, and high-profile involvement at Rutgers with strong family ties at home. He sees himself as part of the Rutgers community, whether in the lab or on the track and cross-country teams. He also lives every day intentionally as a son.

First Name is, quite simply, a gifted and focused scientist, a talented athlete, and a warm human being. As important as research and publishing is to him, as important as competing hard and winning races is to him, so are his relationships with his family, peers, teammates, professors, the people he imagines helping through his work. Though he would more likely call himself a scientist than a humanitarian, it is not far from the mark based on the values he professes, the attention he pays to his place in the scheme of things, and the way he is using his innate and developed abilities to serve more than himself. If this is not *First Name* making of his life a wholesome story, I do not know what is.

Sincerely,

Your Name