



Western Science

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9 May, 2023

To whom it may concern

I am writing this letter to nominate Amalie Hutchinson for the 2023 CCUBC Science Promotion Award. I realize that nominations should come from a “member of the CCUBC”, however Dr. David Coltman - your current president - is the chair of Amalie’s department so is in conflict of interest to make this nomination.

I have known Amalie since April 2019 when she inquired about doing an MSc under my supervision. I was impressed by her CV, academic record and maturity so I happily accepted her into my lab. She completed an excellent MSc project and is now pursuing a PhD co-supervised by Dr. Chris Guglielmo and myself. During her MSc Amalie began working with Gradcast, the official podcast of Western’s Society of Graduate Students. In the attached letter Amalie describes her work at Gradcast and its impact, so I will let that letter speak for itself. What Amalie’s letter does not show is the dedication Amalie has towards this task, and how she balances her communication work with an already full life.

I hope you agree that the best science communicators are practising scientists. By any metric Amalie is an excellent scientist. Her MSc project required techniques new to our lab, so she derived and verified them herself. The resulting work was excellent and the paper was published in a top-flight journal in our field (*Am. J. Physiol. R*; see attached brief CV). It was even recognised by an outside publication for its impact (*Outside JEB*). Amalie’s excellent written communication skills helped her translate these data to a poster which won the Helen Battle Award for best student poster at the 2021 meeting of the Canadian Society of Zoologists.

Amalie started at Gradcast hosting interviews. She was great in that role because she is easy to speak with and understands how to explain complex problems to a broad audience. In my opinion I believe that these qualities arise from the fact that she is an excellent “bench” scientist but also has been a keen naturalist and birder since a young age. As a result she understands her own biological research across many levels of organization, and brings this perspective to her Gradcast interviews. Amalie rapidly rose to a leadership position within Gradcast, allowing her to more effectively disseminate the work of her fellow graduate students.

While working with Gradcast, Amalie has maintained the highest level of academic standards (e.g. NSERC CGS-D) while finding other ways to contribute to Western and the broader community. I highly recommend Amalie Hutchinson for the CCUBC Science Promotion Prize.

Sincerely,