

March 18, 2019

RE: Letter of Support for Marjan Yaghmaie

To Whom It May Concern:

This letter is to confirm that Marjan Yaghmaie was a Visiting Scientist in my laboratory from the 9th of November 2018 to the 20th of March 2019. Marjan was referred by Dr. Min Fang, a colleague in the Department of Pathology who is the Director of Division of Cytogenetics and Genomics. Both Dr. Fang and Dr. Yaghmaie were very interested in Duplex Sequencing, a highly accurate sequencing method used by my lab, and requested to initiate a collaboration to use Duplex Sequencing to determine the role of subclonal *TP53* mutations in the lack of response to therapy in patients with Chronic Lymphocytic Leukemia (CLL). Marjan was very well recommended by Dr. Fang and, thus, I agreed to train her and perform this collaborative project.

Marjan was a role model student from the first day. She read the protocols and associated literature carefully and made sure she understood all the aspects of the method. Her strong background in molecular biology, ability of deep thinking, and attention to detail impressed me. Duplex Sequencing is a complicated method, which requires excellent bench skills to perform successfully as well as excellent analytical skills to troubleshoot and interpret the data. Marjan demonstrated to have both. She learned the method quickly and was able to obtain excellent results and understand their meaning. It was not an easy process because my lab was optimizing two different Duplex Sequencing protocols at the same time: the new CRISPR-DS version that we had just published (PMID: 30232196) and an updated version of the standard Duplex Sequencing protocol (PMID: 25299156). This could have been extremely confusing for most students. But Marjan is smart and very dedicated and invested a lot of time and effort to understand both versions. She helped us enormously with troubleshooting and optimization of the updated protocols. At the end of her stay, she was able to use both protocols and produced high quality sequencing results that will contribute to two different publications.

It is important to mention that during these 5 months Marjan was not only working in my lab but also collaborating with Dr. Fang and her colleagues at the Seattle Cancer Care Alliance and the Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center. These centers are several miles away from the University of Washington and Marjan had to shuttle back and forth several times each week. However, she managed to attend lab meetings and other meetings in those centers, give and attend several presentations and, at the same time, work at the highest level in my lab. She worked long hours and weekends, demonstrating a strong sense of responsibility and commitment. In addition to her CLL project, she also helped with an ovarian cancer project ongoing in my lab in order to learn Duplex Sequencing data analysis and post-processing while her CLL data was still being generated. She is highly interested in this project, which we aim to finish and publish shortly. Thus, her level of accomplishment in just five short months is outstanding.

On a personal note, Marjan is extremely nice, honest, generous, and a pleasure to work with. She got along extremely well with the other members of my lab and was always willing to help in general tasks.

She is very organized and has excellent writing and communication skills, above the level of most postdocs that I have seen in all my years of training.

In summary, Marjan is a highly gifted scientist with a bright future ahead of her. It was a pleasure to have her in my lab and I would accept her as a postdoc without any hesitations. She has all the necessary qualities to be a very successful scientist and I support her 100% in that pathway.

Please feel free to contact me if you have further questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rosana Risques". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a prominent flourish at the end.

Rosana Risques, PhD

Associate Professor
Department of Pathology
School of Medicine
University of Washington