Dear Ms. Carlson:

I believe in science. This may seem an odd thing to say, but I think it needs to be said. Science has been under attack in America with the climate change debate, abortion issues, and healthcare policy. We are at a time when writing is more critical to the scientific community as the public increasingly needs to be persuaded to believe in facts. I will be the first to admit, science does not always make it easy. It is messy, convoluted, and there is rarely one right answer. Coupled with that ambiguity is a highly technical language not representative of the average national reading level. Particularly with basic research, the results may not always seem applicable to society. I have had the opportunity to get a college education and because of my classes, I realize the incredible value of basic research and how it shapes and directs applied research.

As a science major and writing minor in college, I have long been interested in translating scientific research to a lay audience. I have been involved with research at every step of the process from the pilot stages of a study, recruitment, data collection and reduction, helping to edit the final article for submission, reading the journal articles, to re-purposing and re-mediating them in writing classes. This experience has shown me the value of writing at every stage and strengthened my understanding of fundamental research practice.

The mission of NIGMS is one of empowerment through knowledge with the challenge lying in how to best promote and communicate original research. I recently volunteered at an event for 4th-6th grade girls which encouraged them to pursue STEM programs by having them participate in several science demonstrations throughout the day. It was inspiring to see how excited and curious they were about basic science. Many people had worked hard to make science “cool” for them. Understandably, schools cannot always present science in quite so interactive of a format, but providing extracurricular materials to ignite that innate curiosity would be very much in line with NIGMS’s goals. Through many hours of my own studying, I have found that personifying chemical and biological processes is not only entertaining, but facilitates understanding. For example, in redox reactions, oxidized molecules take on altruistic qualities for giving up electrons, while the reduced molecule becomes the bully for taking the electrons. On the other hand, in the interest of making science appeal to an older crowd, I thought something similar to the NPR program “Dinner Party” could instead offer interesting and easily digestible scientific factoids for weekend get-togethers (*Pass the Proteins,* anyone?).

I believe I am equipped with the scientific knowledge and writing skills to be the liaison for disseminating information to educate people to make their own health choices with confidence. No one should feel locked out of science, especially biomedical science that directly affects so many. No matter what kind of career I end up in, I always want science writing to be a part of it. Knowledge is power and as science writers, we have the ability to bring that power to everyone.