

## Faculty Endorsement

Dear Supplies and Travel Grant Committee,

This letter represents our strong support for Mani Bidar's proposal for an Undergraduate Research Travel Grant for Summer 2000. Mani worked with us during Summer 1999 in a collaborative project titled "Computer Modeling Seat Interface Pressures," in which a finite element model of the lower pelvis and buttocks was developed to investigate the effect of cushion thickness on interior pressures in wheelchair users. Mani assisted and contributed to every aspect of the project, namely: to the model design, to the literature search, to the experimental lab tests, to the numerical simulation effort, and to the interpretation and presentation of our results. Along the way he has gained exposure to biomechanics, elasticity theory, finite element methods, and modeling techniques. Most importantly, he has gained an appreciation for the rigors of research. His work has laid the groundwork for future undergraduate participation in this collaboration, and we are very pleased that he will present our results at the 24th Annual Meeting of the American Society of Biomechanics (ASB) in Chicago. He will also present his results at the UWL and UW Undergraduate Research Days.

Mani's summer stipend was paid from a UWL Faculty Research Grant, but Travel and Conference Registration fees were not included on the budget. Therefore, he is asking this committee to fund his trip to Chicago.

Although he is only a sophomore, Mani is currently recognized as one of the best, if not *the* best, students in the Physics Department. Both of us are confident in his abilities and will assist him in preparing for the ASB presentation. He has put a lot of effort into this project, much more than was expected, and we believe his presentation will be well received.

Sincerely,



Robert Ragan

Department of Physics



Thomas Kernozek

Department of Physical Therapy