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To CRS Board of Directors Committee:

The purpose of this letter is to highlight how I will foster my career achievements and leadership experience to contribute to the vision and mission of the Board of Directors and Society if appointed as Director at Large.

I strongly believe that as a highly established faculty and entrepreneur that I can contribute, in my role as Director at Large, to strengthening the CRS's mission as a global leader in controlled release innovation by working at the intersection of academia, industry, nonprofit organizations, and global health experts to advance innovative delivery technologies to clinical translation and global implementation.

I have dedicated my career to technology innovation and global health combined with my strong advocacy for women's health and innovation, focusing most of my research program on developing innovative technologies for long-acting delivery of drugs and cell therapies for prevention and treatment of diseases and infections. My research focuses on developing translational drug delivery technologies and has been highlighted through multiple patents with four issued patents and five patents pending, multiple publications in high-impact scientific journals (4 papers published in Nature Communications) one of which, was featured among the Editors' Highlights pages in Nature Communications, which aims to showcase the 50 best papers recently published in an area (https://www.nature.com/ncomms/editorshighlights#physical). This work was also featured in a press release by Vital Signs at UNC (https://news.unchealthcare.org/2023/02/cdc-unc-collaboration-yields-potential-long-term-hiv-protection/) and was nominated for the CDC's 2024 Charles C. Shepard Science Award. The Shepard Award recognizes authors of the most outstanding peer-reviewed research papers. Our cutting-edge technologies can make a tremendous impact in the field of HIV prevention, dual prevention of STIs and unplanned pregnancy, and several other indications including oncology and regenerative medicine. Our technologies have received over $18M in funding from NIH-NIAID R01 mechanisms, the Gates Foundation, Merck, and USAID, and PEPFAR to develop first-in-line long-acting delivery systems for prevention of HIV, other STIs and unplanned pregnancy. If successfully translated to human studies, these technologies will be game-changing and will make significant impact on global health.

In addition to running a world-class research program at UNC, I also founded a startup company Anelleo, Inc. (https://anelleo.com/) for which I raised over $7.5M in non-dilutive funding to advance the company's first product for infertility treatment. This endeavor has helped job creation and technology growth in North Carolina and my story as an academic entrepreneur was featured last year in Nature Reviews Bioengineering - https://rdcu.be/d67Xu. With 3 issued patents and 3 patents pending, this highly innovative technology is sought as a platform technology that can be used for several indications to address critical unmet needs in the US and globally.

As a dedicated member of the Controlled Release Society, I have been an active member in the CRS and my dedication and contributions are highlighted below:

- Submitted a proposal to the CRS Board to co-Chair a new Focus Group on Women's Health
- Co-Editor of a new DDTR Special Issue on Drug Delivery Systems for Reproductive Health
- Co-Edited a Women't Health Special Issue for JCR
- Co-Chaired the inaugural Women's Health Technical Session in the 2024 CRS Annual Meeting
- Co-Chaired a highly successful Women's Health Virtual Symposium. This symposium was so successful that Dr. Benhabbour worked with the CRS board members to hold a standalone session on women's health in the 2024 annual CRS meeting. The Women's Health Technical Session was very successful and has now become a recurring Session in the Annual CRS Meeting program.

- Member of JCR Editorial Board
- Member of DDTR Editorial Board
- Member of the Women in Science Committee
- Served as Secretary and Board member of the CRS Bioinspired and Biomimetic Delivery (BBD) Focus Group
- Co-Chaired and moderated the BBD Focus Group session at the 2022 CRS annual meeting
- Abstract reviewer for the CRS annual meeting since 2021
- Poster judge in the CRS annual meetings since 2022

Mission Statement

As Director at Large, I will contribute to the mission and vision of the Board of Directors and CRS to foster academic/industry partnerships within the US and internationally to advance innovative delivery technologies to clinical translation and expand on opportunities to highlight scientific and technological innovation and breakthroughs. I will also work with the Board to create a mechanism and technical programming that fosters building an ecosystem to enhance exposure of researchers and clinicians to regulatory experts, global health experts and policy makers to help advance and implement drug delivery technologies globally.

In closing, I would like to thank CRS and the Board of Directors Committee for considering my application and look forward to the potential opportunity to become a new member of the team.

Sincerely,

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