



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE
Pacific Islands Fisheries Science Center
1845 Wasp Blvd. Bldg. 176 • Honolulu, Hawaii 96818-5007

November 9, 2017

University of Hawaii
Graduate School Admissions

Dear Madame or Sir:

It is my considerable pleasure to recommend Shandell Brunson for matriculation into the Zoology Graduate Program at The University of Hawaii at Manoa. I have known and worked with Shandell for almost 15 years. As founder and leader of the Marine Turtle Research Program (MTRP) with NOAA, Shandell began volunteering in my Program as an undergraduate at the University of Hawaii. Ms. Brunson continued to make a reputable, dedicated, and lasting professional impact within MTRP as a high-value employee working full-time as a Biological Technician under the Joint Institute of Marine and Atmospheric Research (JIMAR).

Following Shandell's initial employment with me and graduation from Chaminade University, I was pleased to keep in touch with her career path. When the opportunity arose, I was able to recruit Shandell into her current position as Sea Turtle Stranding Coordinator with NOAA here in Hawaii. Shandell continues to professionally grow with amazing resiliency and creativity in this position. The same characteristics that convinced me to hire her again in 2009 are also why I am happy to provide her with an unqualified high endorsement for graduate study.

Shandell brings to all of her activities energy, enthusiasm, and commitment. This is to be expected of any successful member within the research community, and yet she continues to stand out with her additional strengths, including a positive attitude, initiative, and superior work ethic. Be it as the liaison to city, state, and federal agencies on all Main Hawaiian Islands to supervise and coordinate stranding responses in a statewide sea turtle stranding, salvage, and rehabilitation research program, or leading and conducting necropsies of marine turtles as required for ongoing research and cause of stranding studies, Shandell consistently provides high-quality data and sampling research for the NOAA agency. This speaks to her overall intellectual capacity to learn - attributes that will serve her well in graduate study.

Throughout Shandell's career, she has demonstrated a significant exemplary work performance having been nominated for the 'Research Corporation of the University of Hawaii (RCUH) Employee of the Year' in 2010 and receiving the 'NOAA Fisheries Employee of the Year Award' in 2012.

Shandell Brunson is a highly valued member of the Hawaii and Pacific Islands sea turtle research and conservation community. She can be relied upon for achievement, regardless of the difficulty of the task or the novelty of the challenge. Her combination of learning ability, knowledge, commitment, perseverance, creativity, and compassionate character will make her a valuable member of any academic program.

I encourage you to look favorably upon her application.

Sincerely,

George H. Balazs
Hawaii Senior Sea Turtle Scientist, 1983 - 2017 (Retired)
NOAA Affiliate
Pacific Islands Fisheries Science Center
(808) 683-8402
E-mail: <itsahonuworldinhawaii@hotmail.com>
<George.Balazs@noaa.gov>