Pathway to Physics Ph.D.

Letter of Recommendation

You have been asked to write a letter of recommendation for the Pathway to Physics Ph.D. (P^3) program. We would very much appreciate it if you would do so. The earlier this letter is written, the

Please send this letter to: physicspathways@umd.edu **with the subject line: Letter of reference: students last name.**

Background: The P^3 program is jointly sponsored by the Laboratory for Physical Sciences (LPS)—a federally funded research facility in College Park, Maryland—and the Physics Department of the University of Maryland. Students accepted to the P^3 program will join the Physics Ph.D. program at Maryland—one of the premier physics Ph.D. programs in the country—with generous funding, special research opportunities (at LPS) and intense mentoring and advising to help ensure student success. The program is designed to serve students obtaining undergraduate degrees in physics and related fields from Minority Serving Institution including HBCUs. The underlying premise of the program is that there is a large pool of very talented students in these schools who would make excellent researchers in physics if they pursued doctorates and research careers. However, only a very small fraction of these choose to follow this path. The goal of the program is to increase this fraction by making the option of physics graduate school more accessible and attractive and by helping to ensure that the students who do choose this path succeed.

Your letter: We are interested in identifying students who are likely to thrive at a top physics Ph.D. program such as Maryland's and make significant contributions to research. Thus, we are very interested in a student's academic and research potential. In some cases, this is obvious from their track record as an undergraduate if the student has both exceptional grades and an impressive record of research. However, in many cases students who do not have such a golden track record have qualities such as intellectual curiosity, drive, ambition and grit that make them likely to succeed in as physics Ph.D. student and later as a professional researcher. We are particularly interested in your assessment of the extent to which a student has these qualities.