

September 24, 2021

Asma Behery

2020 Laidlaw Scholars Cohort

### Laidlaw Scholars Program - Reflection Paper

The Laidlaw Scholars program has been such a valuable experience for me that has allowed me to grow so much in such a short period of time. I am incredibly appreciative of the Laidlaw Scholars Foundation for allowing undergraduate students to participate in such a rare and unique opportunity.

Through the Laidlaw Scholars program, my skills and knowledge in research have skyrocketed – I have developed these skills and this knowledge at a much faster pace than a typical undergraduate student would. Through this research position, I have grown familiar with the research process, including writing a research proposal, conducting a literature review, submitting an ethics proposal and preregistration application, collecting and analyzing data, and reporting on results. Designing and implementing this study, alongside my research advisor, has allowed me to develop my experience in research, which is an accomplishment that is especially important to me as an individual who seeks to work in research in the future.

I have also developed my knowledge in the research area of my project, meditation and perceived stress, which I have been able to apply in my everyday life, whether this be within community discussions or within my daily life as an undergraduate student who regularly faces stress. This project has also allowed me to gain a greater appreciation for research, mental health, and psychology.

The Laidlaw Scholars program has also supported me in developing different skills. For instance, I have developed my skills in communication, collaboration, and critical thinking and analysis through regularly meeting with my advisor, and tasks such as the literature review and troubleshooting. I have of course also been able to grow as a leader, having developed my ability to lead without authority and problem solve more independently. This program has also allowed me to develop my self-knowledge and awareness, through encouraging me to better and more consistently identify my own knowledge and limitations and continually learn from these reflections.

In addition to my skills and knowledge development, the Laidlaw program has also been tremendously valuable in helping me advance towards my professional goals. For instance, the Laidlaw program has given me an increased sense of confidence, both in being involved in research and otherwise, which has allowed me to pursue a number of other research and leadership related opportunities. The Laidlaw Scholars program has also allowed me to develop my resilience and persistence, which has been very important in allowing me to overcome the challenges that I often face as I work towards my professional goals. My experience as a Laidlaw Scholar has also opened so many other doors for me and allowed me to be involved in a number of other competitive opportunities.

The Laidlaw Scholars program has had such a positive impact on my life, all the way from the application process to submitting the final paper. It has not only helped me develop in my research knowledge and skills, but it has also allowed me to grow in other aspects of my personal and professional development, including my skills in communicating with others, my understanding of how positive mentorship should be modelled, my knowledge surrounding careers in academia, my confidence, my resilience and persistence, etc. The Laidlaw Scholars program has been such a unique opportunity in which I feel privileged to have been involved.