To whom it may concern,

Crystal Shan has been a member of my research group since January 2024. First as a Co-op student, and now as a directed studies student, she has proven herself a quick study and motivated student, and produced good work on a complicated genomics project. It is my pleasure to recommend her to you for graduate studies.

Crystal came to us with excellent academic performance, which she maintained despite holding two volunteer positions in different labs and a teaching assistant position, demonstrating her dedication and capacity. During her interview, in which she met with other lab members and delivered a presentation on her previous Co-op project, she showed composure and an ability to think critically about her work, which involved curating and visualizing brain- and Alzheimer’s-related sequencing datasets. Overall, I judged her to be a capable student who can rise to multiple challenges.

Since joining the lab, Crystal has consistently shown initiative in seeking out opportunities, such as scholarship applications and opportunities to present her research at local conferences. She quickly absorbed and applied concepts related to CRISPR-Cas9 sgRNA and experimental design, vector cloning, and R and shell programming despite having essentially no experience in these areas. She has now contributed to multiple facets of a project investigating human papillomavirus (HPV) integration sites in cervical cancer, transitioning from functional genetics methodologies to bioinformatic analyses of chromatin conformation and epigenetic datasets. For her summer work, Crystal was awarded a Faculty of Medicine Summer Student Research Program scholarship and a poster prize at the Department of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology’s summer symposium.

Crystal is currently completing a directed studies project, which she designed based on her summer research. Her aim is to integrate 3D genome and epigenetic datasets from cervical cancer cell lines to understand the multi-omic dysregulation associated with HPV integration events. Throughout the year, she has been adaptable to changing plans, not hesitated to ask questions, and worked through her assigned tasks with dedication and equanimity. She has also been resourceful and increasingly independent, to the point of requiring minimal supervision in her current directed studies. I know that along with her strategic planning, critical thinking, and determination, these are all qualities that will serve her well in academia.

In summary, Crystal is a motivated and developing researcher, and further training in state-of-the-art biomedical and genomic approaches will position her for success in this field. Her academic record and experiences show her merit, and I hope you will support her in reaching her full research potential and aspirations.

Sincerely,