Dear Mr. Normand F. Lepine & Mr. Fil Papich,

I wanted to formally thank you for generously granting me the Class of ’83 SURE Award. I am extremely honored to be receiving this award and I am grateful for incredible opportunity it has given me to pursue a research project in synthetic biology – something I have been eager to do since coming to McGill.

I recently completed my fourth year at McGill studying bioengineering and computer science. While I originally started my degree passionate about studying cellular mechanisms, I quickly found that using computational tools and techniques was something that I was also really interested in. As such, I am pursuing the biological information and computational bioengineering stream as well as a minor in computer science.

While my courses have been both interesting and inspiring nothing is more exciting than hands-on experience. My SURE project focuses on using protein engineering techniques to improve the activity of taxadiene synthase, a key enzyme in the production of a valuable compound that has numerous pharmaceutical properties. This project allows me to both use my computer science background to model and study the protein, as well as lab skills to test the improved proteins I design.

The opportunity to apply biological expertise, synthetic biology, computational techniques, and lab skills to one project is incredible. For this reason, I thank you for your generous award. I am confident that this experience will prove invaluable to my growth and career path as a bioengineer.

Sincerely,

A close-up of a sign

Description automatically generated with low confidence

Liv Toft