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Dear Admissions Committee,

LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION SILAS OFFEI DARKO

I am honored to write this recommendation letter on behalf of Silas Offei Darko, whom I have known for almost a decade and growing into adulthood. It is with my keen interest to support my colleague in any way I can and add to any of his exceptional profile he has built in academics and his continuous impact he continues to have accompanied by a very rare resilient character.

I am Isaac Kwabena Kyei Pappoe, a current student at Michigan State University, the Chief Executive Director of Tailored Innovation Lab-a startup in Ghana a non-governmental organization in Ghana aimed at high achieving but underprivileged high school students to open scholarship opportunities.

I have known Silas for the past seven years; we met during the second day of orientation in Kukuom Agric Senior High School, and we were both placed in the same class, Science 1. While the competition between Silas and me in high school was a tough one given a typical Ghanaian education setting, we shared a great bond that emerged outside school. Silas and I were among the top 3 students who won alternating end-of-year academic awards with him eventually wining the best graduating student of the class of 2019. In high school, I lost to Silas during the Team Captain position for our National Science and Math Quiz Team and ultimately remained as his deputy. I would confidently attest that most of my skills, collaborative, and professional prowess are attributed to him. Even though we worked together and were involved in various activities, Silas would tend to mentor me. We were both selected to join the school’s prestigious National Science and Maths Quiz Team to represent the school at the Regional level, a feat that is achieved by a very few students in Kukuom Agric Senior High School and Ghana at large.

Silas to me is one of the few people who never gives up. I started Tailored Innovation Lab with Silas being the backbone behind this. Silas, my cousin, and I had to beat the odds to make this our long-term dream come true, with constant communication and coding throughout the nights to gain recognition. It is indeed fascinating how he can bring out cognitive premises and yield an excellent output. Silas and I started our US college applications after high school. I got into several schools and eventually chose Michigan State University; Silas was no exception—however, financial package is the most important factor for students from our region to consider. This gave birth to Tailored Innovation Lab. Silas currently is a developer at Tailored Innovation Lab where he teaches students in our program robotics, mathematics, and advanced calculus before they depart to the US. Despite taking a four-year gap period, Silas has maintained his top-notch academic standard and continually learns, improves, and makes an impact.

In 2021, Silas steered our premier summer coding project, an initiative originally formed by Students of Cornell University in 2018 (Cynoc Boahene). Silas and I were part of the pioneering students when the program was introduced. When we learnt that the program would not come off last year, Silas brought the annual Innovations bootcamp, a freebie boot camp that starts from middle school to high school. We gained a Community Impact Award for this program we had together. I will be going to Ghana over the summer to work with Silas on a similar project with other students from MSU, Tufts, and Stanford.

Silas undeniably needs the right community to continue to learn and nurture his potential. I am rooting for him because I am certain that he will not only benefit from your university but also the quality of engagement and contribution that he will bring to campus will be immense. Please do not hesitate to contact me at pappoeis@msu.edu.

Best regards,

Isaac Kwabena Pappoe

Michigan State College

Executive Director

Tailored Innovation Lab