



Human Biology UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

Confidential Assessment

Dear Graduate School Admissions Committee,

It is with the greatest of pleasure that I write this letter of recommendation in strong support for one of my best students, Ze Nan (Tommy) Tang, to be considered for admission within the upcoming 2021 graduate school cohort. Although I have only known Tommy for the past 1.5 years, he has made a lasting impact on my expectations from students during the time in which I have known him. I am confident that Tommy is not only gifted academically but also exhibits all of the non-academic skill sets necessary to excel in whatever graduate school or research program that he chooses. He has continually demonstrated both the ability to succeed in a rigorous academic program as well as a strong desire to impact whatever communities that he becomes part of – most notably, the research community here in Toronto.

Over the last 1.5 years, I have had the pleasure of seeing first-hand, all of Tommy's efforts in various capacities in my classroom and throughout our campus. From our first introduction, I was impressed by Tommy's eagerness to learn about neuroscience, mixed with a passion to help others and to take on leadership roles within the university and beyond. Along with his extensive academic portfolio and successes where he has received a 4.0 GPA in every one of my classes and was always among the top students in my neuroscience courses, Tommy has consistently proved to be a conscientious student. His capabilities cannot be demonstrated solely by a view of his academic transcript nor based on his extracurricular activities (though plentiful) alone, but must also be based on his ability to critically challenge himself and his ability to take on complex problems and research questions.

I have personally instructed four senior level courses in which I was lucky to have had Tommy in as one of my top students. In my interactions with him during class, during office hours, and during the period in which I had asked him to be a peer assistant for my classes and help with writing an online textbook with me this year, Tommy has continuously displayed superb resilience, tenacity, passion, creativity, leadership, communication, and (perhaps most importantly) an aptitude for learning. In my personal opinion, Tommy has become the model learner that every program should aspire to have because of his ability to learn, his leadership and collegiality with his peers as well as his interest in impacting the community. During his time in my courses where he excelled (from large lecture classes to small seminars), his expertise in the field of neuroscience has continued to grow whether in writing, presentations, or in his ability to holistically integrate this information. A great case & point has been not only his strong work within the classroom but also as part of different case competitions representing the University of Toronto and the neuroscience program in CULSC science competitions, as well as helping to guide teams through the SCINAPSE competitions.

I have also heard about the great research that Tommy already has done with my colleagues Dr. Ning Yan in biomaterials science that demonstrates that he not only has a great analytical mind, but that he has superior time management skills and is an excellent communicator. Additionally, even though it was challenging to do research throughout a pandemic, he was able to work on CT/MRI image processing and analysis with Drs. De Oliveira and Aviv which highlight that he is a tireless, and motivated researcher and is already functioning at the level of a graduate student. Given Tommy's strong academic history, his strong motivation and successes within research, his innovative ideas and leadership, I believe Tommy will be an invaluable asset to your graduate research program.

After having written several letters on behalf of students recently, I have had the time to reflect on Tommy's growth and maturity and it is my firm belief that he has already exhibited the required standards of excellence and displays continuous growth and learning potential that is required of future graduate researchers. His combined interests in scientific, health, and academic background combined with his engagement in many extracurricular endeavours and academic success demonstrate the breadth of his talents. I am certain he will make a positive impact wherever he goes and would be a great asset to any research program. I have no hesitation in giving him my highest possible recommendation. In seeking out the recruitment of future researchers in your field, I hope that I have made a compelling case on behalf of an excellent candidate Ze (Tommy) Tang. Please do not hesitate to contact me should you have any further questions.

Sincerely,

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