



August 28, 2025

Dear Kanders Churchill Fellowship Committee,

I am writing to enthusiastically recommend Ashley La Rotonda for the Kanders Churchill Fellowship. As the Director of the AI for Impact Co-op Program and Senior Fellow at the Burnes Center for Social Change, I have had the privilege of selecting Ashley as a Generative AI Product Development Fellow from an exceptionally competitive pool of over 400 applicants. Her selection speaks volumes about her promise in leveraging technology for social good, and I am confident she will make outstanding contributions through the Kanders Churchill Fellowship.

Ashley possesses a rare combination of technical excellence and human-centered design thinking that sets her apart from her peers. With four prior co-ops and internships at organizations ranging from Google to DraftKings' Storm Flag game development studio, she brings both the technical sophistication of Big Tech and the creative agility of smaller innovative companies.

What truly distinguishes Ashley is her empathetic approach to problem-solving and her ability to foster unity across disciplinary boundaries. While the challenges we tackle at the Burnes Center can be daunting, Ashley's cheerful disposition and belief in collaborative potential motivates those around her to unite in our shared mission. She breaks down silos between technical and non-technical stakeholders with remarkable ease, embodying the interdisciplinary approach we value so deeply. Her capacity to see people, not just data and statistics, enables her to create solutions that genuinely improve quality of life. She is tech-oriented, but always human-centered—a philosophy that aligns perfectly with the Churchill Fellowship's mission of developing leaders who can bridge divides and create meaningful change.

In her upcoming role as Generative AI Product Developer at the Burnes Center, Ashley will complete an impactful AI project in direct collaboration with public sector partners. This experience—working with government officials and advisors, co-designing and delivering solutions that enhance government services—will deepen her ability to translate cutting-edge technology into tangible public benefit. Her proven track record of bridging technical complexity with stakeholder needs positions her perfectly to maximize this opportunity.

Ashley's unique combination of technical excellence, empathetic leadership, and unwavering optimism in tackling complex challenges makes her an ideal candidate for the Kanders Churchill Fellowship. She has my highest and most enthusiastic recommendation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'David Fields'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, stylized 'D' and 'F'.

David Fields, Ph.D.  
Senior Fellow and Professor of Practice  
Burnes Center for Social Change, Northeastern University