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May 12, 2025

**RE: Google PhD fellowship mentor statement**

Dear members of the selection committee,

I am writing in most enthusiastic support of the application of Megan Darrell, an outstanding M.D./Ph.D. student in my laboratory, for the Google PhD Fellowship.

Ms. Darrell is a very talented, bright, and hardworking MSTP student who is fully committed to becoming an independent research scientist. She has a very strong academic record, having graduated magna cum laude from Wheaton College (MA) with a 3.81 GPA, along with over two years of full-time research experience at The Jackson Laboratory and National Institutes of Health (NIH). She is clearly dedicated to research, science and to becoming a highly effective and impactful physician-scientist. Ms. Darrell plans to combine her interests in bioinformatics, systems neuroscience and medicine, to develop new understanding, diagnostics and therapies for brain disorders.

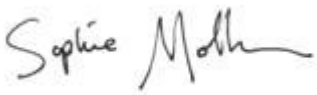
Megan joined my laboratory with an abiding interest in brain research in clinical populations and sensory processing and attention, merging perfectly with the goals of my lab. I was quickly impressed by her maturity, intelligence, positive attitude, work ethic, collegiality and organizational skills. Her background in research, combined with her high motivation and interests, prepared her to hit the ground running when she arrived. Her strong computer programming skills in Python and R and her ability to critically synthesize research literature facilitated her rapid acquisition of the fundamentals of EEG analyses and development of her own theoretical base for neuro-oscillatory processing in autism. Throughout the past year working closely with me and my team, she has grown tremendously as a researcher and proven to possess the qualities to become an independent physician scientist and future leader in the field. Megan is a very fast learner and natural scientific investigator.

A superb level of focus and resolve is evident in Megan's work. I provided her with a dataset to work on when she joined the lab, to serve as a bootcamp of sorts for acquiring the techniques of the lab. Her progress was rapid and she now has a solid manuscript that is almost ready for submission. She has presented this work at multiple conferences, both in oral and poster presentations, and demonstrated that she has developed an impressive depth of knowledge over a short time and that she has strong communication skills. Indeed, Megan is a terrific collaborator, communicator, and overall team player. She possesses a very clear communicative style that conveys straightforward objectives and comprehensively motivates the work to be done. I have also been amazed at how invested Megan is in ensuring an educational experience for our junior team members and in mentorship in general. Being such an effective leader and natural teacher will benefit many future generations of trainees.

Megan’s passion for understanding and helping individuals with brain disorders through novel computational methodology epitomizes the mindset of a physician-scientist. Megan’s curiosity and drive have led her to take a well-characterized dataset and conceptualize new methodologies to analyze it in novel and insightful ways—as described in this research proposal. Thus far, she has demonstrated strong analytical skills and creativity in adapting advanced methods to uncover meaningful patterns in complex neural and behavioral data. She has seized on this fellowship opportunity to learn invaluable grant-writing skills, and the process has clearly spurred an enormous amount of intellectual growth on her part. In short, she is highly prepared to carry out this research and benefit from this fellowship.

In summary, Megan is making terrific progress in the PhD program, and she continues to learn and seek out the necessary training to become an excellent and creative scientist in the Neurosciences. She has a strong desire to help clinical populations through her chosen career path. I am highly confident that she will fulfill this goal, and that she will achieve her proposed research objectives under this proposal and acquire skills that will serve her to grow into an independent scientist. She is, without doubt, one of the best students I have had, and she has my very highest endorsement. I think that it would be well worth it for you to invest in this exceptional young candidate.

Sincerely yours,



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