Recommendation Letter for Felicia Chen

I had the pleasure of managing Felicia during her internship at Lyft. Over the course of her 12-week internship in summer 2024, Felicia consistently impressed me with her technical skill, maturity, and ability to deliver impact under ambiguity. She ramped up quickly in a complex domain and became a core contributor to one of our highest-priority initiatives. I recommend her as a talented and motivated backend developer who can provide great value to any team due to her amazing quick-learning skills and high productivity.

During her internship, Felicia worked on designing and building a robust retry system for payment failures, an area with high visibility and direct revenue implications. Initially, she was tasked with improving the reliability of payment retries. She evaluated several architecture options, engaged cross-functionally with teams, and ultimately proposed a hybrid system that performed a synchronous retry on first failure, with subsequent retries handled asynchronously. This architecture struck a careful balance between performance, reliability, and complexity. Throughout the project, Felicia collaborated closely with other teams such as payments, pricing, and asynchronous platforms, effectively communicating trade-offs and ensuring alignment with broader system goals. Her work directly addressed a gap in the system that had been costing the company over $200,000 annually due to failed charges not being retried effectively.

What makes this accomplishment even more impressive is that Felicia ramped up almost entirely on her own. Our team had recently taken on support for the payments domain following a re-org, and there was no existing subject matter expert available to provide deep guidance. Felicia navigated this ambiguity with independence by reading documentation, inspecting unfamiliar services, asking thoughtful questions, and ultimately charting her own course to a well-architected solution. She was proactive in surfacing risks, writing well-tested code, and continuously iterating based on peer feedback. She also contributed to team knowledge through detailed documentation and participated in on-call training and team reviews.

Felicia's learning speed was extraordinary; she picked up several technologies she had never used before with ease. Working with monitoring and alerting for crucial statistics, and using feature flags for gradual roll-out were among her first starter tasks, all of which were new to her, but she had completed at ease. Her solution greatly improved retry success rates, and was projected to save the company from many future SEVs. The system she built was deployed to production and is now part of Lyft's core payments infrastructure, saving $200,000 annually.

Beyond her technical strengths, Felicia brought genuine warmth and positivity to the team. She was the sunshine of the team, always starting the day with a bright smile and a friendly "hi" to everyone when coming to the office or seeing each other in meetings. Her approachable and cheerful demeanor made a noticeable impact on team morale and created an inclusive, welcoming atmosphere. Felicia's presence made collaboration smoother and the workday more enjoyable for those around her.

Felicia embodies a great combination of ownership, collaboration, growth, and impact focus. As the result of her internship evaluation, she was awarded the highest possible rating, which meant that her work during the internship met the bar for a junior software engineer. I have no doubt she will continue to excel in any team she joins. I would gladly work with her again and recommend her without hesitation.

Conor Murphy, Engineering Manager at Meta (formerly at Lyft)