

Re: Li Shen

Dear Committee,

I am writing to express my support for Li Shen in his pursuit of a Principal Bioinformatician position at the University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center. I have had the opportunity work directly with Li for more than five years via a longstanding collaboration between Thoracic Medical Oncology and the bioinformatics team led by Jing Wang. Our groups meet weekly to discuss ongoing analyses and Li has routinely demonstrated an aptitude for not only the computational work but the biological rationale for the work. During this time, Li and I have co-authored six manuscripts and worked on countless projects. Li has innovated our approaches to drug screening, in particular, allowing us to maximize the utility of our high-throughput screens to select drugs and drug combinations for further translational, and even clinical, investigation. He also brings tremendous expertise in molecular analyses and recently provided a tremendous innovation in single-handedly developing an application for one of our highest impact analyses for small cell lung cancer. Specifically, we have developed a method to discriminate molecular subtypes of small cell lung cancer that has become the gold standard in the translational and clinical arena. However, this led to the challenge of myriad academic and industry teams requesting that we apply our computational algorithm to their datasets, which, while far beyond the bandwidth of our team, would have moved the field significantly forward and established our algorithm as the *go-to* approach for this subtyping. Li independently developed a Shiny application that made it possible for anyone with a dataset to perform small cell lung cancer subtyping without our assistance, but still using our algorithm and citing our work. This sort of self-directed, creative approach is representative of my experiences with Li Shen as a whole. He is a vital part of our team who has demonstrated a willingness to go above-and-beyond what is asked of him (or, in many cases, anticipating what *might* be asked) and would be an asset as a leader in his group.

Sincerely,



Carl M. Gay, MD, PhD