I have known Simisani when she attended my Post Graduate Diploma in Education (PGDE) in Computer Science course work in 2018 and 2021, in which she received a Distinction. I also supervised her teaching practice at Maru A Pula secondary school from 7th June to 22nd July 2021. She was placed in the ICT department where she taught form one and form two Spreadsheets and Database respectively. After the school closure in August 2021 due to COVID-19 outbreak, from 7th September to 16th September, she went back to the school to assist with Cambridge IGCSE and A-levels examinations. This demonstrates her commitment to her student’s learning despite the challenging circumstances.

As working as a Teaching Assistant, she has supervised large classes and provided support to students from first year to fourth year students in basic Java programming, and Computer Architecture and Organization. Managing large groups of students requires a distinct set of skills in clarity in communication, effective time management, and the ability to address students with diverse learning needs.

Simisani has research interests in Machine Learning Optimization Algorithms, and is also

involved in the teaching at university of courses such as Data Structures, Social Informatics,

and Information Technology Management. The grant will assist in the provision of resources

such as tuition, transportation, research dissemination, accommodation, conference fees

and other resources that will encourage continuous learning and skills development. Her

PhD will significantly assist the local university by providing the much-needed personnel in

STEM, and specifically in the field of machine learning and computer science.

Through the organisation R-Ladies Gaborone which promotes gender diversity in data science she has been involved in the local data science community. Specifically her talk about R packages for data cleaning which can be found at https://www.youtube. com/watch?v=gZ517exPzX0 not only reflects her technical competence but also her passion for sharing knowledge to an international audience. Simisani has endeavoured to tackle the gender disparity in data science by means of these initiatives. In this sense her leadership in creating and maintaining communities of practice has benefited Botswanas data science industry and encouraged young women to hone their technological skills.

Simisani is active in the R community and has made contributions to open-source collaborations and other global data science projects. Her involvement in coding data science workshops throughout Botswana and beyond demonstrates her capacity to interact with the international data science community. She now has a deeper understanding of the field thanks to this global exposure which also enables her to stay current with emerging technological trends and methodologies which she integrates into her community service and teaching. Simisanis leadership skills enhance her technical and intellectual prowess. She has planned and led workshops that bring together academics, professionals and students to talk about new developments in technology. The networking mentoring and knowledge-sharing opportunities provided by these workshops are essential for promoting creativity and advancement in data science. Simisanis efforts have helped diversify the technology industry by serving as an inspiration to numerous young women who aspire to pursue careers in the field.

I have no doubt that Simisani would succeed in a PhD program. Her teaching background and strong data science foundation enable her to handle the rigours of cutting-edge research. Furthermore she has repeatedly shown that she is resilient and adaptable. Simisani for example was quick to adjust during the COVID-19 pandemic when most educators were struggling with the difficulties of remote learning. She ensured that her students' education continued while providing them with the support they required through virtual channels. Her return to academia with an advanced degree would be very beneficial to the University of Botswana's Department of Computer Science.

Simisani is in a strong position to spearhead initiatives to introduce new fields of study especially in the quickly growing fields of artificial intelligence and data science. She would probably bring about changes in the universities approach to teaching technology because of her focus on real-world experiential learning and her dedication to creating inclusive environments for students. Her work may also help address regional data science issues keeping the University of Botswana at the forefront of regional academic and technological developments.