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Clinical Informatics Fellowship Program Director
Washington University School of Medicine in St. Louis
660 S. Euclid Avenue, Campus Box 8118
St. Louis, MO 63110

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Dear Program Director,

I am writing to offer my strongest recommendation for Jessica Santiago, MD for the Clinical Informatics Fellowship at Washington University in St. Louis. I worked with Dr. Santiago closely during her Anatomic Pathology residency at UCSF, where I served as her faculty advisor for our pathology informatics pathway and supervised her on the clinical informatics service. Even as a resident, she demonstrated the uncommon combination of rigorous diagnostic thinking, practical systems engineering, and the collaborative leadership that makes clinical informatics initiatives succeed in real healthcare environments.

Dr. Santiago first stood out to me as a PGY-2 resident when she volunteered for a high-stakes operational project to improve turnaround time and result reliability for breast core biopsy biomarkers. She mapped the end-to-end workflow with histotechnologists, accessioning staff, LIS analysts, and breast pathologists, then identified failure points that led to missing or mismatched discrete results in the EHR. Working with our informatics team, she implemented targeted fixes including standardized test naming, automated exception flags for missing results, and a reconciliation step for discrepant fields. The result was a measurable reduction in delays and a clear improvement in downstream chart accuracy.

Importantly, Dr. Santiago never treated informatics as a technical exercise divorced from patient care. During sign-out, she consistently connected data to clinical decisions, anticipating how delayed or ambiguous results could influence treatment planning. In one memorable case review, she detected an interface mapping issue that would have displayed a "pending" biomarker as "not performed." She escalated the issue promptly, documented the root cause, and helped implement a durable correction with validation steps and an audit trail. Her judgment was calm, thorough, and patient-centered.

Dr. Santiago's communication skills are exceptional. When we transitioned from free-text narratives to structured, CAP-aligned synoptic reporting for breast resections, she led multidisciplinary design sessions with surgeons, oncologists, radiologists, and our LIS team.

She facilitated consensus on required data elements, mapped them to standardized terminology, and anticipated downstream uses in tumor board preparation and registry reporting. She also created a brief training module that emphasized both workflow efficiency and data quality, helping the group adopt the change without adding burdensome "extra clicks" for pathologists.

From a technical standpoint, Dr. Santiago delivers. She is comfortable writing SQL for operational reporting, builds reproducible analyses in Python, and understands the constraints of enterprise systems. On our service, she developed a concise dashboard to surface pending case queues, stain utilization, and bottlenecks, enabling section leaders to intervene early rather than react to backlogs. I particularly value her discipline: she tests, documents, and explains her work in a way that makes it maintainable by others, which is essential in clinical environments where systems must be safe, transparent, and reliable.

Finally, as she completes her Breast Pathology Fellowship at Mayo Clinic, Dr. Santiago has continued to deepen both her subspecialty expertise and her informatics perspective. In ongoing multi-site discussions around structured data capture and quality measurement, she has been an effective bridge across institutions, bringing clinically grounded definitions and a standards-based mindset. In summary, Dr. Santiago is an outstanding physician with exceptional potential in Clinical Informatics. She brings the technical competence to build and evaluate systems, the clinical insight to anchor work in patient care, and the leadership to deliver change in complex environments. I recommend her without reservation. Please feel free to contact me if I can provide any additional information.

Sincerely,

Mei-Ling Zhou, MD, PhD
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