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November 4, 2020

Dear Fall 2020 Outstanding Senior Award Selection Committee:

I am writing to express my wholehearted recommendation for Adrian Bao for your Fall 2020 Outstanding Senior Award. Being an alumnus of the University of Arizona and the Computer Science department as well as having more than 20 years of software development and systems experience in both public and private industry, I believe I have a strong understanding of the character, personality, technical problem solving skills, and creativity that is demanded from recent graduates in computer science. In my humble opinion, Adrian encompasses high qualities of these essential traits and is exemplar of an outstanding student of the University of Arizona computer science program, to whom you wish to honor by this award.

I first met Adrian Bao in the fall of 2018 when he applied to a CyVerse student software developer position during his first semester at the University of Arizona, after graduating with an associate degree from Pima Community College. His resume, cover letter, and personal website clearly demonstrated a high level of preparedness, articulateness, and the professional detail I rarely encounter from an undergraduate student. In my experience, I often need to imaginatively extrapolate how well and how long a student with little work experience will become a productive member on my team, but after meeting with Adrian and having him describe his previous academic and side projects, it was clear his learning rate would be short and fast. I was not wrong. In fact, he quickly became a key contributor to multiple cloud projects within CyVerse. His contributions range from implementing devops automation using Ansible for our critical services to writing microservices in Go and Kubernetes. While working part-time at CyVerse to help build infrastructure for life scientists and being a full-time student, Adrian also found the time to participate in campus technical challenges and hackathons, including his Hack Arizona team ranking 2nd among 50 other projects in this year's hackaton. His extracurricular activities further highlight his passion and creativity for software and technology.

In addition to his technical acuity, Adrian is an incredible individual in the level of enthusiasm he puts forth in his work and collaborations with other members of his team. As an example, Adrian worked at Amazon and Garmin during his summer vacations; when returning to CyVerse after his summer internships, Adrian was always excited to share and apply the new processes and technological approaches he learned to his CyVerse projects. I have always been most appreciative of the fact that Adrian accepts and even volunteers for tasks and projects that other students and staff might consider mundane. His main motivation is simply derived from the fact that he can positively impact CyVerse's user community, our project, or even our own staff.



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Today's graduates in computer science clearly need to have the technical skills and the ability to adapt to the rapidly evolving technology landscape. At the same time, individuals who have the fortitude and entrepreneurial spirit while maintaining a sense of community and empathy for others, whether users or their team members, is becoming more important than raw technical ability. Adrian Bao is such an individual and represents an excellent example of the University of Arizona's computer science undergraduate program, deserving the recognition of the Fall 2020 Outstanding Senior Award.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Edwin Skidmore".

Edwin Skidmore  
Director of Infrastructure  
Cloud Native Services  
CyVerse