

Mar 21, 2025

Selection Committee

Hong Kong Laureate Forum 2025

Recommendation letter for Lirong Cao for Hong Kong Laureate Forum 2025 by Prof.
Maggie Wang

I am pleased to recommend Lirong Cao (Liz) for Hong Kong Laureate Forum 2025. Lirong was my doctoral student and was a remarkable asset to our program. I recommend her to attend the Forum with great enthusiasm.

Lirong is a highly dedicated, motivated and talented researcher. Her research on influenza and COVID-19 vaccines demonstrated her extraordinary research ability in leading, conducting, and completing large research projects, and developing new computational models to fill research gaps. She develops the first of the kind methodology framework to enable prediction of population-level vaccine protection with virus genome information. This method helps solve the long-term challenge in vaccinology of early estimation of immune protection before vaccination or infection. Her scientific achievement was exemplified in her excellent track record of first author publications in *Nature Medicine*. Lirong's work also shows great contribution to the global society in prevention of the pandemic. Liz received the CUHK Young Scholars Thesis Award 2022 for her thesis entitled "The Prediction of Vaccine Effectiveness by Viral Genome Sequence Analysis" and CUHK Outstanding Students Awards. She was nominated for the Young Female Scientist Scheme by the Hong Kong and Macao Affairs Office of the State Council.

Lirong is a hard-working person with remarkable communication and interpersonal skills. She has participated in many international academic conferences independently and presented to the top scientists worldwide. She has demonstrated her comprehensive understanding of her interdisciplinary research in virus genomics and population immunology. Liz received an award under the Dr. Barbara Kwok Young Postdoctoral Researcher Travel Grants to support



her attendance at the 9th ESWI Influenza Conference. She was very organized when handling multiple projects at a time and was able to lead a group of interns and student helpers. This clearly demonstrated her high productivity and well communication skills as well as her leadership. Her publication has attracted media attention for the significance of her research findings. Lirong is an excellent young scientist who is passionate, active, and determined to commit to medical research and she has my strongest recommendation.

Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at maggiew@cuhk.edu.hk.

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