Decal Faculty Sponsor Letter of Support for Neuroscience 101

1. How long have you known the student facilitator and in what context?
I have acted as an instructor of record for one of the student facilitators - Mona Li - for the Spring 2023 session of MCB 161, in which she has demonstrated sincere interest in the material as well as a dedication to the study of neurobiology. Both co-facilitators (Mona Li and Andrew Lin) are currently co-leading the Fall 2023 semester DeCal, and I have been in communication with both in discussion of the course.

2. What is the process through which you mentored the development of the syllabus?
The syllabus will be similar to the one currently in use, which I have reviewed. The pacing of the course as it stands has proven to be effective. I am open to suggestions from both facilitators in things they might incorporate into the course in the future.

3. What is the academic value of the course (keeping in mind that topics need to engage with scholarly literature or have a substantive creative or technical component)?
The course immerses students with an eclectic look at neurobiology, starting from the properties of a neuron and its details at the synaptic level (electric and chemical signaling), to systems such as memory and vision. The course will also cover important emerging topics such as the neurobiology of neurodegenerative diseases. Students are asked to read and synthesize news and scientific articles on these topics. The students also participate in debates related to current ethical questions in the field of neuroscience.

4. Have you reviewed the course syllabus to make sure that it adheres to university policies (e.g., policies on the use of illegal substances, policy against intolerance, fees for courses, student activities, etc)? A link for many resources may be found on the Student Learning Center’s Undergraduate Course Facilitator Training and Resources (UCFTR) website: http://slc.berkeley.edu/resources.
Yes.

5. What is your plan for supervision over the course of the semester the class is being offered (i.e., plan to)
The course has been running effectively with minimal supervision. I am readily available to make any clarifications if needed and provide guidance. Additionally, I will periodically check-in with the facilitators to make sure the course is adhering to the syllabus and will assist in determining final grades at the end of the semester. I will give a guest lecture in the course, schedule permitting.
Sincerely,

Doris Y. Tsao, PhD
Associate Professor of Neurobiology