Dear Professor Garry,

 Thanks for your support on my recommendation letter!

 In the attachments are my CV, list of interests in the field of animal geography, and the systematic review I conducted when taking the course “HSCI8101-8117 PhD Required Elective Coure\_2019-2020-1” which you taught us how to write a review. During that course, I conducted a systematic review on how dog-assisted therapy can relieve college students’ exam stress (this is my coursework that related with animal geography). I got A in that course eventually. Another your course I took is the critical scientific reading-writing and analysis, which I got A- in the end. During that course, I wrote a proposal on “Lining up by height might increase students’ body dissatisfaction” and you gave a comment on my idea which was very creative and interesting. And in 2020, I was your TA in your course of “[2020-2-HSCI8005-001 CRITICAL SCIENTIFIC READING-WRITING AND ANALYSIS](https://ummoodle.um.edu.mo/grade/report/index.php?id=113535" \t "_blank)”. And I assisted you and William as a responsible TA throughout the course. I finished my work on time and communicate with you smoothly and professionally. In April 2021, I discussed with you about my idea on “Body appreciation and Vaccination willingness” and your comments are “interesting and important topic”. And I published that research on Vaccines in December that year.

**You can learn about the Geography Graduate Group PhD program through this link** [Geography | UC Davis Graduate Studies](https://grad.ucdavis.edu/programs/ggeo) and this link [The Program | geography (ucdavis.edu)](https://geography.ucdavis.edu/programold).

 Geography Graduate Group in UCD is multidisciplinary degree that covers many subjects such as anthropology, environment, animal behavior, society, and psychology and so on… I think this program is very suitable for me because I want to learn many subjects and it can fulfill my need in knowledge and lectures. And I love to do interdisciplinary research and this program is not only about the landscape, rocks and sands. Students can do various research with professors from many other faculties. Geography is a field of [science](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Science) devoted to the study of the lands, features, inhabitants, and phenomena of [Earth](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Earth). It includes physical geography, technique geography, human geography, and animal geography. What I am interested in is animal geography which studies how non-human animals intersect with human societies and the environment. Under this discipline, I can study many things I am interested in such as wildlife protection, livestock’s impact on environment, human-animal relationship, companion animals, and how human-animal interactions (also called anthrozoology) impact both sides’ physical and mental wellbeing and so on. The study of animal geography as a PhD students include taking lectures, in which they will teach me some basic knowledge in geography, animal geography, and geography research methods (which include quantitative and qualitative method, and they would teach me how to do ethnography, which I always want to do!), and coursework, also called field studies, I can go to the wildlife habitat, farm, and many landscapes to live there, observe things, collect data, and interact with local people and animals there to finish my ethnography study, which is the second thing I am excited about. Then is the doctoral dissertation, I probably going to do some research with Professor Lynette on topics in human-animal-environment relationships through using the quantitative method I have learned in University of Macau and qualitative method I will learn in UC Davis.

**You can know more about animal geography roughly through this link** [Animal Geographies - Geography - Oxford Bibliographies](https://www.oxfordbibliographies.com/display/document/obo-9780199874002/obo-9780199874002-0049.xml#obo-9780199874002-0049-bibItem-0004)

 The supervisor I want to cooperate with is Professor Lynette Hart. Her research interest in human-animal interaction, and animal welfare, animal behavior which matches my research interest very well.

**Her profile can be seen in this link** [Lynette A. Hart | School of Veterinary Medicine (ucdavis.edu)](https://www.vetmed.ucdavis.edu/faculty/lynette-hart). She said she is willing to take me as a PhD student if I get the studentship and funding, etc.

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**My rationale for getting another Ph.D. in geography at UC Davis and how did I generate research interest gradually in animal geography are as follows:**

After a five-year bachelor's study in clinical medicine and a three-year Ph.D. research in mental health epidemiology, I learned well about the human, from physical health and disease to mental health and disorders. In 2020, I started to be interested in human-animal interaction (HAI) when I read an article called "The feasibility of brief dog-assisted therapy on university students stress levels: the PAwS study" from the University of Sheffield. Thus, I conducted a systematic review on how dog-assisted therapy can relieve college students' stress as my essay in one of my first-year PhD courses, which earned me an 'A' eventually. After finishing that course, I had to return to my main research work in lab, which focused on mental health epidemiology, because no supervisors in my faculty were interested in HAI research at that time and the PhD training was high-demanding and heavy workload. Therefore, I stopped to conduct more HAI research at that time and focused on my PhD studies. Eventually I graduated my PhD degree with 11 publications in mental health two years later. However, my interest in HAI never actually stopped. The short HAI research experience in the first year of my PhD sowed a seed in my heart. Since then, I have always tried to learn more in HAI research by reading newly updated publications, joining in HAI lectures, and registering in some Animal Protection Associations. The first turning point happened after I raised my cat Chill as my pet and companion animal in October 2021 that I am able to really take notice in the live beings other than human beings living on the earth, and really started to think about their life quality, life span, and interaction with human and the society. The daily interaction with my cat gives me opportunity to experience HAI on my own. Being involved in affectively in a real-world human-animal relationship inspired me to come up with many research ideas I am eager to discover in my future research work such as issues in pet transportation in China, feral cats rescuing and protection, how to promote domestic cats' wellbeing, and how to reform the in-house and out-house environments to make them more suitable for domestic cats' activity and wellbeing…The second turning point happened after I start to work in the hospital as a residential psychiatrist. Since my undergraduate study in medical school, I have been educated and trained to be a doctor. I expected to be a psychiatrist when I was an undergraduate medical student. At that time, I was interested in human psychological development, mental health, and mental disorders. The interest led me become a PhD student in mental health epidemiology directly after my bachelor's degree and sent me to Sun-Yet-Sen Hospital as a residential psychiatrist after I graduated my PhD. However, after several months of work in the psychiatry department, I realized that practicing medicine and doing psychiatric research are no longer satisfying my curiosity about the world nor promoting my journey of knowing the world and life. It does not fit into my current stages of life, research interests, and preferred working mode anymore. I learned medicine to know human from physical and mental perspectives. Now that I have already learned a lot about human-being, with my realization of the existence of many other lives and environments apart from human-beings as me aging, I start to be curious about the broader questions, i.e., other lives and the environment we are living in, how did the environment and society form into the way they are now, and the interaction between the environment, human beings, and non-human animals. Through working in the hospital, reading up literature, and living my life with cats and plants, gradually, I realized there is a much bigger world out there than the circle of human, medicine, and hospital. I then start to believe and support the concept of *One Health,*an integrated concept and unifying approach that highlights the close link and interdependence of health of humans, domestic and wild animals, plants, and the wider environment (including ecosystems). In summary, my curiosity to the bigger world is leading me into the field of animal, geography, and HAI. I feel a strong suction from the field of animal and environmental research. The idea of being a future anthrozoologist makes me feel excited and passionate. That is why I decided to pursue another PhD degree in HAI-related area.

The Geography program in UC Davis can provide me professional knowledge of animal geography, environment, and HAI. Besides, it can help me develop more research skills. I have learned the quantitative research method in my last PhD, but I am not satisfied with only collecting data and performing data analysis on computer as my main research method. I want to learn field study, qualitative method, and ethnography next. I have a strong interest in it, I love to interview people, and interact with people and animals, and different environments. I believe with thorough research skills training in field studies and qualitative research method, I can be a more mature and competent researcher combining both important research methods in my future research.

As for my career goal, I have some specific plans. As a researcher, I want to be an anthrozoologist focusing on animal welfare, animal protection, and HAI. As an earth citizen, I want to be an animal protector because I have seen many animals are suffering and in some place in China, people are killing, torturing, and abusing animals (cats, dogs, elephants) crucially and inhumanly, I feel so astonished and heartbroken when I saw the pictures and videos. So, I want to stand out and protect them, I want to dedicate my life to animal welfare and protection work to fight for justice for them and make their life easier, more comfortable, and happier. In my daily life, I feed the stray cats in my residential area regularly and rescued two baby cats.

I am fascinated by traveling to different countries and experiencing different cultures. I love studying abroad to communicate with international professors and researchers. I have study experiences in Poland and America as exchange students, and I went to Japan as a speaker in a conference. I have traveled in Thailand and Singapore, where I have impressive interactions with elephants and boa.

As a PhD student, I see myself as a diligent student with strong curiosity and wonderful communication skills (e.g., I can easily communicate with people from different fields).

As a young researcher, I see myself as a determined and creative researcher with strong motivation in HAI, a question-and-interest-leading research mindset, and hope to use my research to make a difference in the world.

As a teacher assistant, I see myself as a teacher that helps undergraduates clear up their confusion, inspire their mind, and encourages them to achieve their goals with my experience of being a student.

As an animal protector, I see myself as a determined and warm-hearted idealist who hopes to protect animals and promote global animal protection.

I hope the recommendation letter can highlight my best qualities in academic, research, teaching, communication skills, multidisciplinary background, clinical experiences, and international horizons.

Let me know if you have any questions!

Best,

Zihan