



THE UNIVERSITY of TEXAS
HEALTH SCIENCE CENTER AT HOUSTON
SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH

HUMAN GENETICS CENTER

February 25, 2012

Naomi S. Fineberg, Ph. D

Research Professor and Chair

Department of Biostatistics

School of Public Health

The University of Alabama at Birmingham

RE: Nengjun Yi, Ph. D.

Dear Dr. Fineberg:

I am pleased to write this letter in evaluation of Nengjun Yi's application for promotion to Full Professor in your department. I have known of Dr. Yi's work, though we have not interacted on any formal projects during that time. Based on my own knowledge of Dr. Yi's published work, as well as a thorough review of the materials that you forwarded to me, I feel confident in providing a strong recommendation in favor of Dr. Yi's promotion to Professor.

I am a professor in the Division of Biostatistics and Human Genetics Center at the University of Texas School of Public Health and working on the statistic genetics and computation systems biology areas.

It is my opinion that Dr. Yi meets all criteria for the award of promotion to Professor. This recommendation is based on (1) excellence in research, (2) commitment to teaching, (3) service to the department and institution and (4) national and international reputation. Dr. Yi is becoming an internationally recognized statistical geneticist. Dr. Yi performed and is performing strong and rigorous research. His strong publication record, given this innovative and



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productive line of research, is very strong. He has 84 publications in in peer-reviewed journals and four book chapter. Similarly, Dr. Yi's record of obtaining outside funding is extremely strong. He is the Principal Investigator (PI) of two R01 grants and Clinical Nutrition Research Center grant at UAB, and investigator of 13 NIH funded grants.

Dr. Yi's research is balanced between theoretical and applied works, and between independent and collaborative work. He has developed novel and powerful statistical methods for comparative genomics, genetic epidemiology and biomedical research. Dr. Yi has made great contributions to the development of statistical genetics and genetic epidemiology. His research works substantially advance our knowledge in genetic epidemiology and have great impact on the field of statistical genetics. Recently, Dr. Yi proposed a comprehensive hierarchical generalized linear model framework for simultaneously analyzing multiple groups of rare and common variants and relevant covariates, and introduced new concepts of group effect and a genetic score, which addressed very important issues in the association studies for next-generation sequencing.

Dr. Yi is also successful instruction, student research supervision, and curriculum development. He has developed three courses and taught these courses every year. The students highly appreciated his teaching in and outside of classes. Dr. Yi has served as a major advisor and three committee chairperson for three Ph. D students and mentored or co-mentored several postdoctoral fellow. His teaching record is excellent.

Dr. Yi's service record is also very strong. Dr. Yi has served as member of the editorial board or associate editor for five journals and served as a grant reviewer on numerous study section review panels at the NIH. He has also reviewed numerous manuscript for the journals.



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In summary, I believe Dr. Yi's record to date clearly puts him at the top of his cohort. He has an outstanding intelligence, clear dedication to science and teaching. Dr. Yi is a leader in statistical genetics and a nationally and internationally recognized outstanding statistical geneticist. It should be clear that if Dr. Nengjun Yi were a candidate for promotion to Professor at the University Of Texas School Of Public Health, he would be promoted to Professor without concern. My only regret is that he is not on the faculty at the University Of Texas School Of Public Health. Therefore, I strongly support your decision to promote Dr. Nengjun Yi to professor.

Sincerely,

Momiao Xiong

Professor

Division of Biostatistics

Human Genetics Center

University of Texas School of Public Health