



Pennington Biomedical Research Center

LOUISIANA STATE UNIVERSITY SYSTEM

November 21, 2012

Tenure and Promotion Committee

The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston

School of Public Health

Division of Epidemiology, Human Genetics and Environmental Sciences

Houston, Texas

Re: Letter of evaluation of Dr. Myriam Fornage, candidate for promotion to full Professor

Dear Tenure and Promotion Committee members:

I am pleased to provide you with a letter of evaluation of Dr. Myriam Fornage's candidacy for promotion to full Professor. I have known Dr. Fornage for a period of about 5 years as a result of my involvement in the CARDIA study in which Dr. Fornage is the Chair of the Genetics Committee and the leading geneticist. During that period of time, we have collaborated on a few projects and we have coauthored a few papers.

I am a Professor at the Pennington Biomedical Research Center, a campus of the LSU System. There I am the Director of the Human Genomics Laboratory, and I hold the John W. Barton, Sr. Chair in Genetics and Nutrition. From 1999 to 2010, I served as the Executive Director of the Pennington Biomedical Research Center reporting directly to the President of the LSU System. In this capacity, I was responsible for making final recommendations concerning promotion and tenure for Pennington faculty.

Research Activities

Since 2007, Dr. Fornage has served as an Associate Professor of Molecular Medicine and since 2009 as an Associate Professor of Human Genetics at The University of Texas Health Science Center. Over the past 5 years, she has been very active in the scientific publication domain. Her curriculum vitae lists about 60 publications that were published or in press since she was promoted to Associate Professor. Her research is published in the most influential journals in the field of genetics, cardiovascular biology, diabetes, hypertension, stroke, and neurology. For instance, she was involved in five papers published in 2011 and 2012 in *Nature Genetics*, a leading journal in molecular medicine with an impact factor of more than 35.

Dr. Fornage is a member of the CARDIA Consortium Steering Committee where she is the leading geneticist. I have been in a position to observe her ability to address scientific and organizational issues in an extremely competent manner. She is clearly highly respected by her colleagues involved in the study and by other geneticists with whom she and I have been involved in collaborative projects. When a scientist is so heavily engaged in large, multicenter projects in which many investigators share data, organizational and analytical skills, and ideas and concepts concerning the true meaning of their observations, it does not take much time to appreciate who are the thought leaders. Dr. Fornage has quickly become one of the key persons to go to in order to move projects ahead. She is highly respected by all contributors and is always approached to be part of the leading investigators of these large enterprises.

Dr. Fornage enjoys a national reputation as illustrated by the fact that she is regularly invited to present at national meetings. Her stellar reputation as a scientist extends beyond the United States. Dr. Fornage has been invited to make presentations at five international meetings since 2007 in her main areas of research.

As one would expect, her research is well supported by the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and by contracts from large studies and institutions with which she has established research collaborations. Her research program has been well supported since 2000, and based on the list of her current grants and of applications pending, there is little doubt that she will continue to be well supported in the foreseeable future.

According to the Statement on Scholarship made available to me, the contributions of Dr. Fornage relate primarily to scientific discoveries but also to integration. The latter results primarily from her strong involvement in multicenter, collaborative research based on large cohorts, genome-wide exploration of common and rare variants, and multiple investigators. In this regard, the direction that her career has taken represents an excellent example of cross-discipline interactions, with the goal of illuminating important biological and physiopathological questions.

Mentoring and Service

Dr. Fornage is very active in graduate education and mentoring activities. From her curriculum vitae, we understand that she has been the primary adviser for six master's students, six postdoctoral fellows, and two junior faculty members, one in Epidemiology and the other in Biostatistics. She has served on several committees of the Graduate School.

Dr. Fornage has been very generous with her time, as illustrated by her service on numerous NIH working groups and strategic planning committees, as well as NIH special emphasis panels and study sections. Her appointment to the GHD study section is a clear recognition of her reputation in the field of genetics and common chronic disease. She has also served as a reviewer for grants of the American Heart Association, the Swedish Research Council, the National Medical Research Council of Singapore, and the Alzheimer's Society and the Bupa Foundation in London. She is also in great demand as a reviewer by the leading genetics and biomedical journals.

In brief, Dr. Fornage has proven to be highly institutionally minded, competently engaged in the scientific enterprise of genomic medicine, and nationally and internationally recognized as a leading scholar. If Dr. Fornage was a candidate for promotion to full Professor at Pennington Biomedical Research Center, I am extremely confident that she would get the unanimous support of the Promotion and Tenure Committee and would be promoted to this professorial rank.

It is therefore with great enthusiasm that I recommend her to the Tenure and Promotion Committee of The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston. I remain available to provide you with further information should you so wish.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Claude Bouchard". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Claude" and last name "Bouchard" clearly legible.

Claude Bouchard, Ph.D.
John W. Barton, Sr. Chair in Genetics and Nutrition
Director, Human Genomics Laboratory