# THE UNIVERSITY *of* TEXAS

## HEALTH SCIENCE CENTER AT HOUSTON

### SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH

HUMAN GENETICS CENTER

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Medical College of Georgia
1120 15th Street, AE-1005
Augusta, GA 30912-4900                     May 10, 2012

Dear Dr. George:

I am pleased to write this letter to strongly support Dr. Hongyan Xu's application for tenure in the College of Graduate Studies, at the Georgia Health Sciences University (GHSU).
I have known of Dr. Xu's work, though we have not interacted on any formal projects during that time. Based on my own knowledge of Dr. Xu'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. Xu's tenue.

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. Xu meets all criteria for the award of tenure. 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. Xu performed and is performing strong and rigorous research. His strong publication record, given this innovative and productive line of research, is very strong. Dr. Xu has published 33 peer-reviewed papers, mostly as leading or corresponding author. He was awarded an R21 grant (R21 NS057506) from NIH to investigate the impact of hidden population structure and admixture on the statistical testing of disease genes associations and four P01, R01 and R03 as co-investigator. Through the grant, Dr. Xu has developed novel statistical approaches for large-scale genetic association studies accounting for hidden population structure, which is especially critical for genome wide association studies in recently admixed populations. Dr. Xu has also developed new formal tests for linkage disequilibrium for genotype data, novel statistical test for genetic association using sequence data from NGS accounting for rare genetic variants, and statistical tests for differential methylation pattern for cancer and complex diseases. Dr. Xu has made great contribution to the methodology development in statistical genetics. His research

works substantially advance our knowledge in genetic epidemiology and have great impact on the field of statistical genetics.

He is also co-investigator of several funded grants. Dr. Xu also has excellent record in teaching. He has taught and co-taught four courses and mentored 10 students.

Dr. Xu has strong record of outstanding institutional and national service. He served NIH special emphasis review panel 2011 and 2012 as a grant reviewer. He is a member of the Data Collection and Harmonization group of the Registry and Surveillance System for Hemoglobinopathies (RuSH) program by NIH and CDC.He has also reviewed numerous manuscript for the journals.

In summary, I believe Dr. Xu'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. Xu is a leader in a competition that will not be settled for many years, but holds great promise for human welfare. It should be clear that if Dr. Hongyan Xu was a candidate for tenure at the University Of Texas School Of Public Health, he would be awarded tenure 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 award Dr. Hongyan Xu a tenure associate professor position.

Yours sincerely

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