**THIS LETTER MUST BE PRINTED ON COMPANY LETTERHEAD**

TODAY’S DATE

U.S. Department of Homeland Security

U.S. Citizenship & Immigration Services

**Re: Mr. Yaotian Zou**

Dear Officer:

My name is Dominique Lord and I write this letter in support of Mr. Zou to provide additional insight regarding Mr. Zou’s role and research responsibilities in working as a research assistant to pursue his master’s thesis at Texas A&M University, and the education and training required for this highly specialized role and research. I am able to attest to this as I held the position of Professor of Civil Engineering, and directly supervised Mr. Zou from August 2010 to August 2012 on his thesis research.

Having worked in the field of highway safety research and new and innovative statistical methods for modeling motor vehicle collisions since DATE, I believe I possess the experience and knowledge to describe both the nature and quality of Texas A&M University’s requirement for the role of research assistant which Mr. Zou held. My primary interests are conducting fundamental research on accident analysis methodology, new and innovative statistical methods for modeling motor vehicle collisions (including Bayesian statistics), and before/after evaluation techniques. The results of my research have been used by researchers across the world and several areas, including medicine, accounting, mathematics and statistics, biology and most engineering disciplines among others. I have had more than 105 papers published in peer-reviewed journals and more than 90 papers at international conferences with a peer-reviewed process.

From 08/23/2010 to 08/20/2012, Mr. Zou was pursuing the degree of Master of Science in Civil Engineering, thesis option. His area of focus is transportation engineering. As the chair of committee, I directly supervised his thesis research, titled as “Over- and Under-Dispersed Count Data: Comparing the Conway-Maxwell-Poisson and Double-Poisson Distributions”. His thesis research focused on examining the applicability of advanced statistical modeling approaches to solving the real-world problems faced by traffic engineers. In this case, the problem his research tried to solve is to compare the performance of two statistical distributions in predicting the motor vehicle crash frequency on given roadways for given traffic volume and roadway design. His results can help traffic engineers to better predict future total number of crashes per year on different roadways so that they can prioritize investment on roadway infrastructure improvement. The research results have been published on a high ranking peer-reviewed journal.

To be specific, Mr. Zou’s thesis research tasks and percentage of time to be spent on those tasks are as the following:

* Conduct literature review on current statistical modeling approaches for traffic safety research and motor-vehicle crash data analysis (10%).
* Perform statistical simulation and evaluate the applicability of the traditional and newly proposed statistical distributions using simulated crash data (20%).
* Conduct data cleaning, aggregation, pre-processing and explorative analysis on the real-world motor-vehicle crash data (20%)
* Evaluate the predictive performance of the traditional and newly proposed statistical distributions using the real-world crash data based on different metrics (20%)
* Summarize the research findings and propose recommendations based on research results (10%).

As the thesis title and research tasks suggested, Mr. Zou’s research focused heavily on the hands-on the use of statistical and mathematical modeling and data analysis. Also required is a solid understanding on how those quantitative approaches were applied to solve real-world problems in traffic safety. Mr. Zou got his bachelor’s degree in engineering field with high GPA, finished multiple undergraduate and graduate courses in mathematics and statistics as well as transportation engineering and general civil engineering, and continuously sought guidance on statistics from me and another professor of statistics in his thesis committee. His mixed background, passion for applying statistical approaches to solving real-world problems, and two years of solid graduate research experience in Texas A&M University have earned him a well-deserved master degree.

Should you require any additional information about Mr. Zou’s research experience with Texas A&M University, please do not hesitate to contact me at the number below. Thank you.

Very truly yours,

Dominique Lord

Professor

Zachry Department of Civil Engineering

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