



UNIVERSITY OF
MARY HARDIN-BAYLOR

EDUCATION FOR LIFE... EXPERIENCE OF A LIFETIME

October 1, 2020

Dear Members of the Promotion and Tenure Committee

It is a pleasure to write a letter of support for Dr. Aaron Baggett as he applies for promotion to Associate Professor and for tenure. Aaron has been a valuable asset to the psychology department and a good friend since joining us here several years ago, and he is most deserving of both promotion and the award of tenure.

First and foremost, Dr. Baggett provides us a skill set that most psychology programs cannot count on having. He is not only capable of teaching both introductory and advanced statistics and experimental design courses, but he is willing and excited to offer these courses almost exclusively. Most psychology departments have to rotate such courses through several different faculty members who offer them only begrudgingly and without a great deal of efficacy—it is extraordinarily uncommon to find someone like him, and it affords us a great deal of flexibility in how we offer our other courses.

Not surprisingly, other departments on campus have taken notice of his abilities. Dr. Baggett has been asked to teach graduate statistics courses in both the College of Education and in the Physical Therapy program. He is our campus community's go-to consultant for statistical questions and assistance, and I have directly benefitted from this expertise on numerous occasions. My grad school mentor once told me that anyone who can do statistics can always count on having a job, and UMHB is very fortunate that we have someone like Aaron. Not only is he able, but he is always willing and eager to help. This unique skill set in itself is certainly enough reason for us to offer him tenure.

Of course, though—there is more than just that. Aaron is a skilled researcher in his own right. He is a meaningful contributor to the fields of statistics and analytics, far greater than simply a staff statistician. He also has an appetite for university service which far exceeds that of a standard faculty member. He currently serves as the director of the Institutional Review Board, a work-intensive position requiring a great deal of coordination with colleagues across campus. He has also served as the Director of Undergraduate Research, which requires the coordination of research travel grants, and the production of Scholars' Day twice a year. As someone who ran Scholars' Day for several years, I can attest to just how much work it is, and have no problem admitting that he has taken the event and made it better than what I left him with. He has a keen mind and energy for innovation, and he is always searching for ways to make things better. This is another desirable skill—and frankly an uncommon one—to find in faculty colleagues.



Another aspect of Dr. Baggett's innovation can be found in his desire to develop a graduate program for the psychology department. He was instrumental in designing a Masters level Data Analytics program that was approved several years ago—however due to budget limitations and other constraints that program has never come to life. Despite this, it was his initiative and foresight that developed the shell for that program, and he was prepared to assume the role of Program Director when it launched. Few indeed are the colleagues who conceive of new programs and take the necessary steps to design them and bring them to life.

I've served as the chair of the psychology department for ten years now, and Dr. Baggett is really the only person I have ever considered as my likely successor. He has an aptitude for leadership and an interest in the mechanics of the university that other colleagues simply do not possess. And that's not to speak critically of my other colleagues—many simply want to teach and do their work and have that be that, and there is nothing wrong with that. Aaron, though, has always been interested in more, and I think he has the most upward mobility of anyone in our department.

His unique skill set, his eagerness to work and to collaborate, and his general interest in UMHB make him the consummate colleague. Aside from this, he and his family are friends of my family. They are good, genuine people, and that is certainly a trait to consider when choosing who to invite to be a part of the university community for years to come. He is just the sort of person whose promotion and tenure you recommend enthusiastically.

If you have any questions or would like additional information, please don't hesitate to get in touch with me.

Best regards,



Trent Terrell
Professor, Psychology
tterrell@umhb.edu
254-295-4630