*Your letter of nomination should* ***summarize the project****,* ***describe the student's role in it****, and* ***give your overall assessment of the student's research effort****.* ***If other individuals assisted the student or contributed to the work described in the abstract****, please name those individuals and explain the roles they played. If another student working with you has submitted an application for an earlier Dean's Prize competition, please explain the relationship of the two projects. Please address the letter to the Student Research Committee.*

Dear Student Research Committee,

I had the pleasure of advising David this past spring and summer on this project examining time trends in the utilization of anterior temporal lobectomy. In this project, we obtained access to a national database of hospital admissions over the last twenty years (the National Inpatient Survey) and examined the trends in temporal lobe epilepsy and anterior temporal lobectomy. The results of this project have been quite convincing in showing a very limited link between evolving society standards and clinical practice. The results of this project have been accepted to Neurology and will be published in the near future.

David was responsible for the data extraction, manipulation, and the majority of data analysis. David wrote a program to identify patients in the national database by ICD-9 codes, allowing us extract relevant patient outcomes and demographics. David has a background in programming and statistics, and wrote over 1000 lines of code in Python and R to perform the statistical analysis. This was a quite task as over the span of twenty years, the national database changed file specifications multiple times and the relevant information was scattered across multiple files each year. Each year had a multiple files identifying hospital variables, patient variables, and secondary procedures and comorbidities. This was an integral part of the project, and without his contribution, this would have been very difficult to pursue.

David was also mentored by Dr. Dario Englot, Neurosurgery PGY2. Dario was instrumental in guiding David and provided the big picture perspective to the analysis, while David was responsible for the analysis and data extraction. This was a synergistic relationship, much like the guidance of a postdoc provides a medical student researcher in a basic science setting – David was responsible for the hands on analysis, while Dario was able to provide much direction and suggestion. For the publication, Dario was did the majority of the writing of manuscript, while both David and Dario worked on tables. David also created the figures – the maps of the United States colored by the utilization of ATL.

David played an important role in this project, and I strongly recommend David for the Dean’s Prize for Research.

Edward F. Chang MD  
Assistant Professor in Residence of Neurological Surgery and Physiology   
Co-Director, Center for Neural Engineering at UC Berkeley and San Francisco