

**Dept. of Electrical Engineering
& Computer Science**

Min H. Kao Building
1520 Middle Drive
Suite 401
Knoxville, TN 37996
Phone: (865) 974-3461
Fax: (865) 974-5483
<http://www.eecs.utk.edu>

September 3, 2016

Dear Sir or Madam:

It is my pleasure to write this recommendation letter in support of Julian Kohann. I have known Mr. Kohann for roughly 2 years, first as an instructor in a junior level survey of programming languages course and as an instructor in a senior level databases and scripting languages courses, and then as the advisor for Mr. Kohann's senior design project. Mr. Kohann received a B in the programming languages course and finished 19/47 students. He received an A+ in the database course and finished 5/60 undergraduate students and 8/80 students in all, including graduate students. In both courses Mr. Kohann performed extremely well on both the programming assignments and the exams. Mr. Kohann's grade in the programming languages course would almost certainly have been an A, but there were two homework assignments toward the end of the semester that he was unable to complete, which was probably due to time constraints at the end of the semester. However, he was one of the highest scoring students on the final in that course so he clearly understood the material.

Mr. Kohann's senior design team designed and implemented a web-site for collecting assessment data from the department's courses. The assessment data includes numeric scores that indicate how students performed on certain outcomes, such as ability to apply CS knowledge to design problems or ability to work on multidisciplinary teams, and narrative summaries that describe what went right and wrong in the course. The department's assessment committee uses this information to provide feedback to instructors in an attempt to improve the student outcomes. The web-site was implemented in Python's Django toolkit. It provides a front-end that allows a professor to enter the assessment data and a database back-end that stores the information. In addition to his CS background, Mr. Kohann also has an artistic background and he designed and implemented the entire front end of the site. The resulting interface was aesthetically pleasing and easy to use. It showed a good sense of user interface design. This web-site is moving into production mode in December 2016.

Mr. Kohann was the clear team leader on this project and was the point person who communicated with me about the design requirements. Mr. Kohann was extremely responsive to my requests and guided his team to a successful conclusion of the project. When the project was completed at the end of the Spring 2016 semester, it still had to be ported from its development Cloud 9 site to its production site on our department's servers. Although Mr. Kohann did not have to do so, he came back for a week at the beginning of the

Fall 2016 semester to help port the site to our department's servers and get it up and running for me. I greatly appreciated this help and initiative from Mr. Kohann.

Overall I think Mr. Kohann will be a wonderful contributor and team member on any project on which he participates. Mr. Kohann is unusual amongst computer scientists in that he has an extroverted personality and a natural tendency to lead. He also has excellent oral and written communication skills and wonderful initiative. Obviously these "soft skills" should be welcome skills for most projects. Mr. Kohann combines these "soft skills" with an excellent set of technical skills, including good programming skills. Given this unusual confluence of soft and technical skills, I think Mr. Kohann is a fairly rare commodity and will probably be one of the strongest candidates for your position.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Brad Vander Zanden". The script is cursive and fluid, with the first letters of each word being capitalized and prominent.

Brad Vander Zanden