



TO: Dr. Joan Laura Foster
Dean, College of Letters, Arts and Sciences

FROM: Dr. Ting Jiang, Chair
College of Letters, Arts and Sciences RTP Committee

DATE: February 14, 2018

SUBJECT: Tenure and Promotion Recommendation for Dr. Ethan Tsai, Assistant Professor,
Department of Chemistry

The CLAS RTP committee has unanimously recommended (by a vote of 9-0) that Dr. Ethan Tsai be granted tenure and be promoted to Associate Professor with his 2018-19 contract. Dr. Tsai has made important contributions in teaching, scholarly activity and service, and meets or exceeds all criteria required for a tenure review as measured by their departmental guidelines. In addition, he is likely to continue his high level of accomplishment throughout his MSU Denver career.

Following is a summary of the minimum requirements needed for tenure and promotion as measured by departmental guidelines; highlights illustrating how he has met or exceeded them; and a few general statements.

Teaching: Meets Standards

- Taught a variety of courses in Organic Chemistry including CHE 3100, 3110, 3120 and 3130
- Taught Department's capstone course, CHE 4950 Senior Experience in Chemistry multiple times
- Co-developed and taught an advanced special topics class: CHE 490C Chemistry of Therapeutics
- Developed and delivered a new course in the Brewing Science program (BVG 4810 Brewing Quality Analysis)
- Taken an inquiry-based approach and developed innovative new experiments for the laboratory curricula (CHE 3120 and 3130)
- SRI scores meet the requirement in the department guidelines

This committee notes the department committee's and the department Chair's concerns regarding student comments in Dr. Tsai's evaluations. After carefully reviewing Chemistry department guidelines, the committee did not find clear indication that negative comments are a metric to evaluate teaching performance. We believe that Dr. Tsai's teaching meets the standards as they are outlined in the department guidelines.



Scholarly Activities: Meets Standards

- Published three peer-reviewed articles since 2014 in respected Chemistry journals
- Co-authored a peer reviewed book chapter in *Innovative Uses of Assessments for Teaching and Research*
- Was a Co-PI on a NSF grant (\$199,719) that funded NMR spectroscopy at MSU Denver
- Presented a poster titled "Paintbrush Terminated NTB Mesogen" at the Gordon Research Conference in 2015
- Currently overseeing the Chemistry department's undergraduate research program and has mentored several students who are currently enrolled in prestigious PhD programs

Dr. Tsai maintains an active and impressive research agenda. Of particular note, he has helped several students to pursue graduate studies beyond MSU Denver.

Service: Meets Standards

- Lead person in Chemistry department's implementation of the NMR facility; represented MSU Denver as the NMR Facility manager
- Served on multiple department level committees since 2014, and is currently the Chair of Chemical Hygiene/Chemical Storage Development committee
- Co-chair of the university level Dr. Eric Stephen Ball Scholarship Committee
- Developed curriculum and served as the Faculty Advisor for the College of Professional Studies/Hospitality's new Beer Science program.
- Given two guest lectures in the community since 2014

Dr. Tsai has shown a commitment to service at the department, college, university, and community levels. We are particularly impressed by Dr. Tsai's significant contribution to the NMR facility at MSU Denver. Dr. Tsai's service clearly meets the standards as they are outlined in the department guidelines.

Narrative and Selected Items for Review:

Dr. Tsai's narrative is well written and provides a thorough description of his accomplishments in each of the three areas for evaluation. In particular, he addressed his efforts to adapt his teaching style to better serve MSU Denver's diverse student population.

In addition, Dr. Ethan Tsai's portfolio meets the minimum Handbook requirements of additional materials for review: two supporting teaching, one supporting scholarly activities and one demonstrating service. This candidate supplied:

- Three items related to teaching activity
- Four items related to scholarly activity
- Three items related to service

**Interview:**

During the interview, Dr. Tsai was asked directly about his efforts to improve his SRI scores as well as student learning outcomes. The committee is pleased to learn the three steps Dr. Tsai has taken to address this issue. First, he now has class representatives who can be approached by students to anonymously provide feedback to Dr. Tsai. Second, he now utilizes an online Google document which provides a real time platform for students to anonymously express concerns and ask questions. Finally, Dr. Tsai has changed his grading strategy for CHE 3100 to optimize students learning outcomes.

Recommendation:

Based on our evaluation as highlighted above, we recommend Dr. Ethan Tsai be tenured and promoted to Associate Professor with his 2018-2019 academic year contract. Based upon current reviews, we anticipate that his future contributions in teaching, scholarly activities and service will continue to grow and benefit the entire Department, College, University and community.

cc: Dr. Ethan Tsai, Assistant Professor of Chemistry
Dr. Andrew J. Bonham, Chair, Department of Chemistry