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Akihito Kamata, Ph.D.
Chair, Dept. of Educational Psychology & Learning Systems
307 Stone Building
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Dear Dr. Kamata:

Thank you for asking me to review Dr. Alan Jeong's research and scholarship as an outside reviewer and provide advice on whether he should be granted tenure in the Department of EPLS at FSU and promoted to the rank of Associate Professor. I have reviewed the materials you sent me, and provide my assessment below.

Dr. Jeong has established himself as a scholar in the fields of distance education and instructional systems. He has an impressive research record with 12 publications in the major peer reviewed journals in the field of distance education and instructional technology, published nationally and internationally. He has two publications in *The American Journal of Distance Education*, the premier journal in our field published in the USA, two articles in *Distance Education*, published in Australia, two articles in the *Journal of Distance Education* published in Canada, two articles in the *British Journal of Educational Technology*, published in the U.K., and articles in other well recognized journals such as *ETR&D*, *Instructional Science*, *Computers and Education*, and the *International Review of Research in Open and Distance Learning*. He has secured internal funds to conduct research and engage in software development reported in his research. In addition, he has presented several conference papers in recognized venues such as the American Educational Research Association Conference, the Association of Educational Communication and Technology Conference, and the Annual Conference on Distance Teaching and Learning. Dr. Jeong's scholarship has been recognized in his appointment as the Consulting Editor for *ETRD*. He also serves on the editorial board of the *Quarterly Review of Distance Education* and conducts reviews for *The American Journal of Distance Education*.

Dr. Jeong's research record presents a scholar who has a clear focus and direction. He has continued to develop the line of research he engaged in for his doctoral dissertation, has tested and refined the software he developed, and improved the research methods he employed. He has made a significant contribution to the field of collaborative online learning by analyzing how the characteristics of the message, messenger, response,

responder, and collaborative tasks affect discourse processes, specifically critical thinking and reflection. He has also contributed to the field by developing software tools and methods to sequentially analyze computer message interactions and visually represent the complex processes of group discourse. He showed me this tool at a conference when it was in its early stages of development and I was impressed. Those of us who teach online know what a time consuming task it is to analyze online discourse to determine collaborative construction of meaning. Dr. Jeong's contributions in these areas offer guidance to both researchers and practitioners. I particularly liked his paper on "The effects of conversational language on group interaction and group performance in computer-supported collaborative argumentation," as his findings support the work I have done on social presence in online environments. The findings of this study that showed that messages with more conversational language were more likely to elicit responses to produce more critical discussions than messages with less conversational language, offer practical guidance to online course designers. His research papers show evidence of a thorough review of literature, and thoughtful analysis of results.

Dr. Jeong's research and software development has potential for the future development of intelligent systems to automate the task of assessing online group discourse. The software program "ForumManager" which enables the downloading of discussions to MS Excel provides an easy avenue to assess group and individual performance. It would be good to see the further development of this software. I also believe that further research into differences in gender in interaction patterns can contribute to the field. I would encourage Dr. Jeong to explore other research methods such as qualitative content analysis to determine the quality of online interactions, and the processes involved in knowledge construction, and integrate these methods into his current research. Using data sets from other contexts such as online professional development would also be very useful. It would be good to test the software in other settings and contexts, other than in the setting in which it was developed, and with different populations.

Based on my review of Dr. Jeong's scholarship in the area of distance education and instructional technology, I would support promotion and tenure for him at FSU. I would support tenure and promotion for him if he were a candidate at the University of New Mexico based on his research record. I am not familiar with his teaching and service at FSU and I am unable to comment on these two areas, which are important for tenure and promotion considerations at my institution.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call me at 505-277-5046 or e-mail me at lanig@unm.edu

Sincerely,



Charlotte N. (Lani) Gunawardena, Ph.D.
Professor
Distance Education and Instructional Technology