

November 12, 2023

Dear Review Committee:

It is my distinct pleasure to provide my support Ms. Yuxian Cui's application for the Dr. Mary K. Beyrer Graduate Student Scholarship from the Foundation for Advancement of Health Education. I am a Professor and Associate Chair for Research in the Department of Prevention and Community Health in the GW Milken Institute School of Public Health and the Associate Center Director for Population Sciences and Policy in the GW Cancer Center. I am a clinical health psychologist by training, earned my MBA with an emphasis on marketing in 2017, and have spent over a decade in schools of public health. In my 14 years working with public health trainees, I have worked with and/or mentored many junior faculty, postdoctoral fellows, doctoral students, and master's level students. Thus, I can attest to Ms. Cui's promise as a highly-productive scholar with potential for a high-impact career in health education and communication.

Ms. Cui has worked with me as a doctoral student at the Milken Institute School of Public Health at George Washington University since August 2022. She joined our team to expand her already excellent skill set in research methods, theory, and scientific and grant writing and to augment her content expertise among a team of scholars with similar interests, specifically in socio-structural determinants of tobacco and cannabis use. In fact, she joined our team via recommendation from her master's training mentors at Johns Hopkins University who recognized Ms. Cui's high potential and the benefit of diversifying her exposure to new perspectives and approaches.

Our team takes a multilevel perspective that embraces a health equity lens to address community health, and uses multimethod approaches to examining these issues. Since joining our team, Ms. Cui has been most intimately involved in three NIH R01s focused on tobacco and cannabis regulation, marketing, and impact on consumers. In her roles, she has been highly productive, collaborative, and industrious in identifying ways to make meaningful contributions to the work being conducted and to the literature.

Ms. Cui currently has 12 peer-reviewed publications (3 first-authored), 9 of which have been yielded from her work with my team since August 2022. Since joining my team, she has also co-authored 8 additional papers under review (1 first-authored, 3 second-authored) and 3 key conference abstracts. These publications and abstracts have all focused on substance control research among youth with a lens of health education and communication. Ms. Cui has demonstrated a high level of creativity, critical thinking, and insight in her research and has also shown both the ability to collaborate successfully and work independently. Not only is she an outstanding research scholar, but Ms. Cui has demonstrated a passion and commitment to teaching and mentoring, already supporting several MPH students on our team. In particular, Ms. Cui has shared her strengths in conceptualizing compelling research questions and using various data sets and analytic approaches to address them. In short, Ms. Cui has already established a firm foundation for her professional future, and through her doctoral work, she will secure the successful launch of her career as a faculty member focused on community-engaged health education and communication research to enhance public health, especially for youth.

On a personal level, Ms. Cui is an absolute pleasure. She is calm, kind, selfless, and team-oriented. In fact, I commented to my colleagues during a meeting that "Yuxian is the kindest, sweetest, most humble person I've ever met", at which point another faculty member verbally indicated his enthusiastic agreement. As her mentor, I have had to ensure that she takes credit for her work and accomplishments, that she asks for opportunities, and that she considers her own advancement. In today's world, it is rare to know someone so giving and humble, so it gives me absolute joy to be able to celebrate Ms. Cui as she continues to position herself for the next phase of her career.

In summary, Ms. Cui will continue to be a highly productive and impactful scholar, will be an important asset to trainees, and will undoubtedly continue her practice of service to the community. She is among the top young scholars with whom I have had the pleasure to work. I have absolutely no hesitations in writing this letter recommending her for this scholarship. Please do not hesitate to contact me if I can provide any additional information. Good luck with your deliberations, and I hope you seriously consider Ms. Cui, as she will make significant contributions that advance the mission of the Dr. Mary K. Beyrer Graduate Student Scholarship from the Foundation for Advancement of Health Education!

Sincerely,



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