



Department of Orthopaedic Surgery

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UAMS Promotion and Tenure Committee

September 14, 2016

Dear review committee,

I am writing this letter in full support of Dr. Richard Kurten's application for promotion to full professor at the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences.

Richard and I have been acquainted since 2007 when I joined the Lung Cell Biology Lab as a research technician. As a recent college graduate, Richard was my direct boss and, as such, was accountable for training me in multiple techniques related to proper scientific method and laboratory management. Richard taught me time-lapse microscopy, primary cell isolation, and cell fractionation techniques; all of which have been crucial throughout my career. It became clear to me very quickly upon learning these techniques that Richard held himself and those around him to a very high standard of work and intellect. Richard works tirelessly to perfect his work, and because of this, there is a distinct respect amongst colleagues and students for the science and approach that Richard applies to all aspects of his professional life.

Richard instilled laboratory skills in me while also inspiring me to elevate my career by enrolling in the graduate school program at UAMS. He took on the responsibility of mentoring me not only as an employee, but also as a student and future colleague. Over the first year of graduate school, Richard continued to teach me important laboratory techniques, encouraged academic success, and helped me build the confidence needed to effectively approach scientific questions. Richard accomplished these efforts by offering feedback on research experiments, assisting me in crafting research questions by providing expertise, guidance and giving clear advice when necessary. My interactions with Richard during this critical year ignited a desire within me to ultimately pursue a career in academic science.

As a PhD student, I rotated in several labs within the Department of Physiology and eventually decided to join a lab focused on orthopedics and endocrinology. However, I knew that my progress would be stunted unless Richard continued his close mentorship, so I invited him to be a member of my graduate committee. While not an orthopedic specialist, Richard's vast expertise in cellular biology and endocrinology were pivotal in the original design of my research plan and the eventual twists and turns that every PhD project takes. Much of my research in orthopedics utilized skills that I learned while working with Richard. For example, I developed a method for live cell tracking using time-lapse video microscopy under his supervision and the data I gathered eventually became the driving force of my doctoral dissertation, and later the publication of novel results.

There are so many instances throughout my career where Richard has been an outstanding mentor, teacher, and friend. I learned from Richard what it means to be a scientist, and how the work that we do in basic science is important and impactful. It is safe to say that my career would not have happened without the positive influence of Richard, and therefore I fully endorse him as a worthy and deserving applicant for promotion to full professor.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'T. Fowler'.

Tristan W. Fowler, Ph.D.