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FELLOWSHIP NOMINATION

February 7, 2022

I am writing to enthusiastically nominate Dr. Ying-Ling Jao for Fellowship within the Gerontological Society of America (GSA). Dr. Jao is a Tenure-Track Assistant Professor of Nursing at Penn State. She has a master's degree from the Adult and Gerontological Nurse Practitioner Program and a PhD degree in nursing (gerontological focus) from the University of Iowa in 2014. She has been engaged in advancing gerontology for over 12 years. As her colleague for over six years, I can attest to her strong commitment to the health and wellbeing of older adults through her work as an educator and a researcher. I also state unequivocally that Dr. Jao has been an active and productive member of the GSA community and is committed to the mission of GSA.

Dr. Jao's Engagement and Scholarly Achievements in Gerontological Education and Mentoring

Dr. Jao has been teaching courses in the gerontology certificate program at Penn State since 2015, including gerontological assessment and gerontological interventions courses. Her courses have attracted graduate students across disciplines, including Nursing, Communication Sciences, Education, and Health and Human Development. She has mentored over 20 research mentees across undergraduate to PhD levels. The success of her mentorship is evident by her mentees' accomplishments, including 10 manuscripts, 22 conference presentations, and four research-related awards. She also has been involved in the leadership team at the Center of Geriatric Nursing Excellence (CGNE) at Penn State. She co-developed and co-led the CGNE Gerontological Scholars Program to engage undergraduate and graduate students to pursue a gerontological nursing career.

Dr. Jao's excellence in teaching and mentorship has been recognized with awards. At Penn State, she was selected for the distinguished honors faculty program and implemented the educational initiative "Inspiring Young Scholars Through the Study of Older Adults" for honors students across colleges (2018-2020). Nationally, she was recognized by the National Hartford Center of Geriatric Nursing Excellence (NHCGNE) as a Distinguished Educator in Gerontological Nursing.

Dr. Jao's Engagement and Scholarly Achievements in Aging Research

Dr. Jao is a nationally recognized leader in the assessment and non-pharmacological management of neurobehavioral symptoms in persons with dementia. In particular, she is a pioneer in the field of apathy in dementia, which despite its high prevalence is poorly understood, poorly managed, and understudied. Her groundbreaking research established the connection between the social and physical environment with apathy. She developed the Person-Environment Apathy Rating (PEAR) scale, the first scale to measure apathy within an environmental context, a key to accurate assessment. Over the past five years, the PEAR has been used to evaluate the effect of technology and environmental interventions (e.g., virtual reality and social robots) and the PEAR has been used in 11 research institutions in the U.S., Australia, Netherlands, and Hong Kong.

In addition, Dr. Jao's research identified environmental factors (social and physical) that affect apathy and other behaviors in nursing home residents with dementia. Her research demonstrated the contribution of interpersonal interactions to both positive and negative affect in nursing home residents with dementia. In addition, her research was the first to identify that nursing home residents are less apathetic when the physical environment offered individually tailored stimulation that prompts engagement and fits functional ability. Her work expanded the prevailing framework of person-environment fit in dementia care to include the individuals' preferences and psychosocial needs. She works with Architecture and Engineering collaborators on developing

smart lighting interventions and socially assistive robots to improve physical environments and social interactions for dementia care.

Dr. Jao's significant contributions are evident in the dissemination of her work. She has presented at numerous conferences and published 24 manuscripts in peer-reviewed journals. Her interdisciplinary research has been funded by foundations and the National Institute of Health (NIH)/National Institute for Aging (NIA). In one current study, she is leading an interdisciplinary team as Principal Investigator (R21AG062931) to examine nursing home caregiver communication and its impact on residents' apathy.

Dr. Jao's Involvement in GSA Activities.

Dr. Jao has been engaged with GSA for over 10 years, on a sustained and strong basis. She joined GSA in 2009 when she was a PhD student (2009-2014 student member, 2014-2015: transitional member, 2015-present: regular member). She has had 16 presentations and chaired one symposium at GSA annual scientific meetings. Over the past 8 years, except for one year, she has given one or more presentations at the GSA annual meetings. She has published two first-authored manuscripts in *The Gerontologist* and one first-authored manuscript accepted in the *Innovation in Aging*. She has served as a reviewer for GSA abstracts (2015-present), *The Gerontologist,* and *Innovation in Aging*. As a member of the Health Sciences Section, Dr. Jao has served on multiple GSA committees. She served as a member of the Health Science Annual Scientific Meeting Working Group Committee in 2021. At the Society-wide level, she is currently serving on the Member Outreach Volunteer Team as well as the Editor Search Workgroup of the Program, Publications, and Products Committee for *The Gerontologist*. Dr. Jao also serves as a mentor on the GSA Mentor Match Program.

In summary, I believe Dr. Jao is an outstanding candidate for GSA Fellowship and offer my hearty endorsement for the same. She has a strong record and commitment to the science of aging and dementia. As a recognized leader, Dr. Jao has made a significant impact through her teaching, mentoring, and research. She has made sustained and substantive contributions to GSA. I am confident that, as a GSA fellow, she will bring her passion for excellence to the mission of GSA where she will continue to effectively advocate for the needs of older adults, their families, and those who serve them.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you would like additional information and thank you for your consideration. My colleagues and GSA Fellows, Dr. Ann Kolanowski and Dr. Donna Fick, also endorse this nomination, as attested by their signatures below.

Sincerely,

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