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Dear Colleagues,

This letter is to offer my unreserved support and to confirm my role as Primary mentor for Dr. Jie Sun's proposal "Simultaneous T1/T2 mapping of carotid plaque for monitoring therapeutic response."

This proposal aims to investigate the feasibility of simultaneous T1/T2 mapping for measuring carotid plaque burden and tissue composition in a more quantitative way than current methods. I believe the ITHS Translational Research Scholar Program (TRSP) is an ideal funding mechanism to perform this innovative and promising study. As the primary mentor for this proposal, I will be responsible for Jie's ongoing guidance and support during this project, including participation in ITHS program activities, assistance with the NIH grant development, and guidance on the proposed project as well as mentorship. I will also ensure that his efforts devoted to this project and career development is covered by a non-grant budget so that the TRSP budget can be used solely for other project support. I feel I am well suited for this role. In addition to training over 40 fellows and junior faculty members over a period of 20 years, I have also been a mentor on a NIH T32 training grant, NIH K awards, and multiple AHA mentored research awards.

Jie began as a post-doctoral fellow in the Vascular Imaging Lab (VIL) and was promoted to Acting Instructor in 2015. VIL has pioneered the field of MR plaque imaging for more than 20 years. Our work has been instrumental to the development of high-resolution black-blood carotid MRI techniques and the establishment of tissue classification criteria, which are widely employed by academic centers and hospitals worldwide. Currently, I am the Principal Investigator on two ongoing R01 grants and one R21 grant and Co-Investigator on a number of other grants. In our multi-disciplinary group, Jie demonstrates his great potential for a career of independent investigator with a track record of publications and a great ability to collaborate across departments and disciplines, which far exceeds the typical abilities of an early career researcher.

To further promote Jie's development into an independent investigator, the results from this proposal will be expected to be published in a peer reviewed journal and lead to the submission of a competitive NIH K or R application by the end of the program. As such, Jie will be able to continue his research career, with the data generated in this application.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'CYuan'.

Chun Yuan, Ph.D.
Professor of Radiology
Co-Director, Vascular Imaging Laboratory