

USC School of Dramatic Arts

June 17, 2017

Dr. Eric van Baars
Director, School of Theatre and Dance
Center for the Performing Arts Building
1325 Theatre Drive
Kent State University
Kent, Ohio 44242-0001

Via E-mail: fvanbaar@kent.edu

Dear Dr. van Baars:

It is my understanding that the Kent State University Ad Hoc Promotion Committee wishes me to provide a letter of support with regard to the assessment of Dr. Yuko Kurahashi vis-à-vis her research, performance, and creative activities; teaching, and service; and wishes me to address her merit with regard to her university achievement and national/international prominence. Based upon the materials made available to me by the candidate as evidence, my statement of support follows. It addresses sustained creative activity and nature of venues as well as impact on the field. I cannot address the issue of extramural funding from competitive funding sources because I do not feel qualified to evaluate the candidate in that vein, as I work in a field in which such extramural funding is not a dimension of the mainstay of activities.

Since 1999, Dr. Kurahashi has sustained an above-average book publication record, which includes notable books. Please allow me to use one of her books as an example. Her book, *Asian American Culture on Stage: The History of the East West Players*, provides a needed history of the nation's oldest Asian American theatre company and the nation's longest running ethnic theatre company. This documentation provides a multitude of disciplines (for example: theatre, dramatic literature, literature, critical studies, English, history, American studies, and Asian American studies) with in-depth knowledge of an important dimension of U.S. Culture and the place of Asian American culture within the greater culture. The documentation becomes even more significant as the Asian American population continues to grow by leaps and bounds. For example, the San Gabriel Valley region of Los Angeles is over sixty-two percent Asian American and many high schools in that region are over seventy-two percent Asian American.

In addition to an active publication of book, which will be augmented by Dr. Kurahashi's publication of a new book about the dramatist Ping Chong in 2018, the candidate has published sixteen articles and more about a diversity of topics focused on the theatre discipline at-large as well as on specific subjections within and outside of the field such as Asian American theatre, intercultural relations, community relations, Native American

Indian studies, disaster in society, and science with regard to DNA studies. In these articles, Dr. Kurahashi provides both professional and personal exploration that help to illuminate the landscape of overall theatre studies.

Furthermore, Dr. Kurahashi's research maintains links with community writing, such as her ongoing relationships with *The San Diego Free Press* and PlayShakespeare.com. These explore the arena of social justice as well as theatre studies.

Lastly, allow me to express my support for Dr. Kurahashi's teaching. Her teaching record is solid. The subject matter of her classes as well as her study-abroad work are vital to the education of students. While I have not been in the classroom with Dr. Kurahashi to observe her teaching firsthand, her record speaks well of her commitment to teaching.

With regard to her service activities, her dedication to the governance of your university and your department is evident. The record shows that she engages in a variety of important commitments that seem targeted on the preservation and evolution of the university and department. This is commendable.

Thank you for this opportunity to express my support for a committed colleague in the arts, dramatic arts, arts education, and academia.

Sincerely,



Velina Hasu Houston, M.F.A., Ph.D.

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