May 5, 2025,

To whom it may concern,

I had the opportunity to observe Yongfeng Tang guest lecture in my undergraduate course, *POL 397B: Origins of Data in Politics and Public Policy*. This course introduces students to the foundational principles of data collection and analysis, with particular emphasis on experimental design and survey research. Yongfeng delivered the session on "Conducting Surveys" on March 18, 2025. His lecture was thoughtfully structured, substantively informative, and delivered with pedagogical clarity.

The session was structured around core elements of survey design—from sampling frames to response bias—and aligned well with the week's intended learning outcomes. Yongfeng used carefully selected examples from sources such as the Pew Research Center and the American National Election Studies (ANES) to concretize abstract concepts. These examples helped students understand not only the technical differences among survey modes and question types, but also their implications for data quality, validity, and generalizability. The inclusion of visuals comparing survey formats, and real survey items, including the ones from Yongfeng's own work in progress in Taiwan, added clarity and helped engage visual learners.

Yongfeng's presentation benefited from strong slide design—clear, well-paced, and not overly text-heavy. His overview of data collection modes was particularly useful, framing face-to-face, telephone, web-based, and computer-assisted methods along a spectrum of interactivity and cost. He was also attentive to applied challenges, such as social desirability bias and nonresponse, and introduced solutions like list and endorsement experiments. Essentially, the guest lecture was professionally delivered and coherent throughout.

One way to further elevate Yongfeng's guest lecture would be to more explicitly articulate the applied significance of rigorous survey and experimental design across non-academic contexts. Establishing clearer linkages to domains such as public opinion polling, program evaluation in the nonprofit sector, and governmental needs assessments would help students grasp how design decisions—ranging from question wording to sampling strategy—bear directly on the validity and policy relevance of empirical findings. The inclusion of targeted case examples demonstrating how poorly constructed instruments can lead to interpretive errors, misplaced interventions, or misallocated resources would underscore the broader stakes of methodological rigor. Pedagogically, incorporating low-stakes but conceptually rich exercises—such as deconstructing flawed survey items or evaluating the appropriateness of specific response scales—could facilitate active learning

and strengthen students' diagnostic capacities. A more in-depth engagement with survey mode effects would be particularly useful: contrasting data elicited via face-to-face, telephone, and web-based platforms would help illuminate how interviewer presence, accessibility constraints, and mode-specific response biases shape results. Furthermore, raising the issue of measurement comparability in mixed-mode designs would introduce students to one of the most salient challenges in contemporary survey practice. Finally, when presenting more advanced techniques such as list experiments, briefly unpacking their inferential logic and rationale—particularly their utility in addressing social desirability bias—would enhance both conceptual clarity and methodological literacy among students new to these approaches.

Overall, Yongfeng Tang demonstrated fluency with the material, professionalism in delivery, and clear pedagogical planning. His guest lecture complemented the syllabus well and offered students a substantive and accessible overview of survey research. I am pleased to support his future instructional opportunities and believe he would be an asset in any teaching or mentoring role involving social science research methods.

Sincerely,

Fatih Erol, PhD
Research Social Scientist and Lab Manager
School of Government and Public Policy
P.O. Box 210027, Social Sciences 115A
University of Arizona, Tucson, Arizona 85721