Dear Members of the Search Committee,

I am writing to apply for the Assistant Professor (Tenure-Track) position in Instructional Design and Technology at the University of West Florida. I am completing my Ph.D. in Learning Design and Technology at Purdue University (expected Summer 2026), and I am eager to contribute to UWF's learner-focused mission and nationally recognized online programs that serve diverse and nontraditional student populations.

Through extensive methodological training, I am well-versed in research methodologies and have a deep commitment to advising doctoral students. My research examines how artificial intelligence (AI), data analytics, and instructional design frameworks can work together to improve human performance and self-directed learning in both educational and organizational contexts. As the lead author, I reconceptualized self-directed learning in the generative-AI era and proposed a theoretical framework that integrates personal attributes, process, and learning context. Building upon this theoretical foundation, I led a research team and developed and validated the PA-SDA Scale (Personal Attributes for Self-Directed AI Learning), a contribution that also earned the Global Smart Education Innovation – Research Innovation Prize. Following this, I conducted structural equation modeling (SEM) to map the structural relationships among these personal attributes with a sample of 699 global learners. My dissertation extends this work through a longitudinal mixed-methods study using cluster analysis and latent transition modeling to examine how adult learners' personal attributes evolve over time when engaging with generative AI tools in their learning and professional practices.

Complementing that first-author arc, I actively co-led or engaged in collaborative, student-centered projects that bridge academia and industry. With Intel Labs, our study examined collaborative problem solving in conversational AI-mediated learning environments, which was recognized as the AECT Outstanding Publication Award. In collaborating with scholars from multiple institutions, I co-initiated and contributed to a multi-stage mixed-methods project examining nontraditional students' generative AI use behavior, ownership of learning, and learning performance. I also contributed to a workforce-focused project examining how AI-enabled systems can enhance real-time performance feedback, adaptive learning, and workforce readiness to bridge academic research with professional practice, which became a well-supported pilot project that a multi-institutional interdisciplinary team used for pursuing federal grants.

Beyond publications, I engage deeply in collaborative grant development, including Spencer Vision Grant, Spencer Small Grant, Unity for Humanity Grant, and NSF proposals. The Spencer Small Grant proposal entitled *"Exploring Inventions in Self-Directed Language Learning with Generative AI"* advanced to the finalist stage, representing a core strand of my research agenda. I served as the lead writer and primary designer of the project, responsible for every stage, from conceptual framing and instrument design to budget planning, timeline development, and cross-

institutional coordination. I have engaged in multiple NSF proposal development, starting from ideation to writing, which further prepared me to lead future external grant endeavors.

I have rich experience in designing and teaching asynchronous online and face-to-face courses for diverse and nontraditional learners. At Purdue University, I re-designed and have been co-teaching graduate courses in Instructional Design and Technology, such as *Strategic Assessment and Evaluation*, a fully online, asynchronous course that serves working professionals. I redesigned the course to strengthen structure and accessibility by integrating multimedia modules (eight weekly overview videos), interactive Brightspace activities, and clear sequencing with enhanced onboarding and assignment guidance. I teach two sections of 16 students, guiding them to apply Kirkpatrick and Kirkpatrick's evaluation model across educational and workforce contexts. In addition, through Beijing Normal University and ConnectEd, I have co-taught graduate-level courses on teacher training and research methods that emphasize digital pedagogy and evidence-based design. At Beijing Normal, I guided pre- and in-service teachers in integrating technology and reflective practice, while at ConnectEd I mentored graduate students in systematic reviews and data analysis using NVivo and R. My teaching emphasizes authentic, project-based assessment, individualized feedback, and community-building in online environments.

Beyond teaching and research, I bring industry experience and applied innovation that bridge instructional theory and practice. At Indiana University Bloomington, I recruited, trained, and supervised over 200 tutors, built assessments, and led courses from introductory through capstone levels while co-designing a blended "double-loop" tutoring model that continues to inform post-pandemic practice. In the learning industry, I served as Product and Curriculum Manager at HiLink LLC, leading the design and development of an all-in-one learning management system (LMS) that improved instructional efficiency and learner engagement. I also designed and developed TICapp, a mobile learning application for heritage Chinese learners, applying design thinking and iterative prototyping to translate research into scalable educational technology. I have also been actively reviewing for leading journals (*Computers & Education*, *IEEE TLT*, *JCHE, BJET*, *Learning and Instruction*, *System*) and major conferences in the field.

I am inspired by UWF's commitment to innovation, access, and community engagement, and I see a strong alignment between my work and the department's mission to prepare practice-oriented professionals through fully online programs. I would be honored to contribute my expertise in AI-enhanced learning design, research mentorship, and instructional innovation to advance UWF's goals. Thank you for considering my application.

Sincerely,

Belle Li