



Biocomplexity Faculty Search Committee  
% Prof. Rob de Ruyter van Steveninck  
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November 17, 2004

Dear Search Committee:

**Re: Reference for faculty position candidate, Dr. Pavel Baranov**

I strongly recommend Pavel (Pasha) Baranov to you. It is quite clear that he will be highly productive and an engaging, supportive colleague.

He came to Ray Gesteland and myself with a very positive recommendation from a friend, Richard Brimacombe, in the Max Planck Institute in Berlin, (Pasha had done part of his thesis work with Richard and part of it in Moscow where he was registered for his degree.) While Pasha had clearly done good work for his ribosome cross-linking thesis work, it was also clear that he did not have an in-depth exposure to molecular biology techniques. After he joined our labs to work on reprogrammed genetic decoding (recoding), not surprisingly it took him a little while to broaden his skill base, adapt to common usage of English, and improve his public presentations. This he did in style. At the same time he has developed a real flair for bioinformatics. One example of this can be seen in his papers on the frameshifting required for expression of release factor 2 in most eubacteria. Since that time this skill has developed with his clever and insightful unpublished work on transcription slippage and analyses of overlapping ORFs.

Pasha is very thoughtful. An example of the end products of his sophisticated insights is evident in his ms on the role of P-site tRNA, which was recently published (*RNA* 10, 221-230). Another is in his new work on release factors which is at an advanced stage. Pasha is having a lot of beneficial influence on others in the lab and it is being done in a very nice way. For instance the Hansen et al paper cited in Pasha's CV, is very much Pasha's initiative. He was also very considerate in the way he handled the authorship issues. Pasha initiated and has maintained the Recoding database as well as designing the logo.

Pasha is highly dedicated and currently has a lot of work approaching completion. Though the time is right for him to get his own lab, I will certainly miss his almost continuous stream of new thoughts or newly recognized relevant aspects. Because of the major transitions Pasha has made, I think only the most recent part of his CV reflects his potential and that he has a very bright future. I recommend, in the strongest possible terms, you interview him. This would give you and your colleagues the opportunity to discern that I am being properly realistic with my remarks both about his potential and his work nearing completion.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

John F. Atkins, Ph.D.  
Research Professor

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