

December 8, 2004

OFFICE OF THE  
VICE PRESIDENT  
FOR RESEARCH

Biocomplexity Faculty Search Committee  
c/o Professor Rob de Ruyter van Steveninck  
Department of Physics  
Indiana University  
Swain Hall West 117  
Bloomington, IN  
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Dear Search Committee:

I am pleased to write in strong support of Ms. Victoria (Anne) Smith. I have know Anne for years; I served on her Qualifying Exam Committee, and was a member of her dissertation committee. Along the way, she was in one of my graduate classes.

Anne is a gem. She is bright, very bright. She may be brilliant. Anne is also endowed with a streak of perfectionism and attendance to detail that can be a valuable asset in empirical studies, for she is able to comb through gigantic data sets to satisfy her thirst for accuracy and completeness.

We (her committee members and mentors) have always enjoyed Anne and have been challenged by her. She has learned a lot, been motivated to go elsewhere (e.g., the Smithsonian) for additional expertise, and has developed steadily as a grad student. Nevertheless, there was a real turning point in her development when she "discovered" modeling. Anne became and has remained infused with a new energy, new light, and a sense of purpose. Her developmental rate has accelerated and she is blossoming all over. Unfortunately, I am a user of modeling, not a performer, so I will leave it to some of the other writers to give you an account of the details, but I can attest to the impressive scientific import of what she is doing and her admirable ability to converse about the modeling, the biology, and the synthesis in meaningful ways. This has been a thrill.

Anne's experiences and productivity at Duke are creating a rather distinguished record. She remains innovative, creative and insightful. She has stayed in contact with me and I feel that she is developing the kinds of approaches that are the promise of multi-leveled mathematical approaches to questions in the life sciences. Her research is timely, powerful and applicable to cells, cell assemblies, organisms and adapted groups! She knows computation *and* biology. This is the winning combination.

Anne is quite independent. No problem there. She is inherently interdisciplinary in her interests and will be a great collaborator. She will contribute more than her fair share.

Anne is a delicate soul, I believe, but she has plenty of fortitude and tenacity, the kinds that serve research well. I recommend her to you with great enthusiasm.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jeffrey R. Alberts".

Jeffrey R. Alberts  
Associate Vice President for Research  
and Professor of Psychology

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