



November 9, 2004

Professor Rob de Ruyter van Steveninck  
Biocomplexity Faculty Search Committee  
Department of Physics— Swain Hall West 117  
Indiana University  
Bloomington, IN 47405-7105

Dear Search Committee:

It is a pleasure to write in support of **Christopher Klausmeier's** application for a faculty position in support of your new Biocomplexity Initiative. I think that he would be an excellent fit, and would interact extremely well both with the theoreticians in the department and the experimentalists. Chris has the real potential to be a star.

Chris came to me as a postdoc, with superb training by Dave Tilman, Claudia Neuhauser and Bob Sterner at Minnesota, plus postdoctoral experience in Europe. Along the way, he has worked on a number of problems—vegetation patterns, algal vertical distribution and stoichiometry—and in each case, he has brought a fresh perspective to the problem, and produced unique new insights. He is able quickly to master the empirical and theoretical literature relevant to a problem, reformulate the problem in accessible terms, and then produce a model that can both be analyzed and related to data. He has strong mathematical abilities, as well as a solid sense of the biological underpinnings of whatever he does. He has good taste in choosing pivotal and interesting problems, so his results are sure to attract attention.

I have read Chris's work in all of these areas, and have learned something each time. However, I have been most involved in the stoichiometry work, in which he has been the leader among a small cadre of postdocs that we hired to help us try to understand the ecological and evolutionary stability of Redfield ratios in marine (and terrestrial) systems. While everyone else stumbled around, Chris developed a truly novel approach that I think is simply brilliant. The work has already led to two high-profile publications, and more are on the way. I think that this work is the best thing he has done. I have been particularly impressed with his mathematical intuitions about how the models (and biology) should behave, and am very excited about the insights. We are continuing to collaborate, and I am eager to do so as long as I can.

Chris will make a great faculty member. He is low-key, but an excellent expositor. He is a fine colleague, and works well with others. Indeed, he was a leader in our lab. We were truly sorry to see him leave.

I think that Chris would be a great fit at IUB. He is reasonably happy at Georgia Tech, but the situation is not so good there for his wife and collaborator, Elena Litchman. Thus, he is a real target of opportunity.

Yours sincerely,

Simon A. Levin  
Moffett Professor of Biology

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