



Chemistry  
College of Science

December 14, 2004

Biocomplexity Faculty Search Committee,  
c / o Prof. Rob de Ruyter van Steveninck,  
Department of Physics,  
Indiana University,  
Swain Hall West 117,  
Bloomington IN, 47405-7105

Dear Dr. de Ruyter van Steveninck,

I am writing this letter in recommendation of Dr. Dennis Livesay, an applicant for a faculty position in your program. I have known Dennis since he joined our department in September of 2000. My office is adjacent to his, he and I collaborated on the writing of a modeling lab for the Biochemistry series, we were both members of the founding group for the Molecular Modeling & Simulation option within the Chemistry major, and I have evaluated him for Retention-Tenure-Promotion (RTP) purposes several times.

Dennis has been an exceptional faculty member. As you can see from his C.V. or web page, he has been very active in research. His main areas of research have been the physical origins of protein thermostability and the prediction of functional motifs using solely protein sequence. He has a very good background in physical biochemistry, bioinformatics, biology, and programming. He is a team player: he is collaborating with me on molecular dynamics simulations of fusion peptide structure in membrane environments, he has advised some of the biologists on aspects of their research, he is submitting a grant application with a physicist at Cal State Northridge, and he sometimes visits or corresponds with his former research adviser Dr. Shankar Subramanian at UCSD. He has lots of good ideas and is energetic, conscientious, and ambitious. It should also be pointed out that Dennis established his research group and conducted his initial research here during a period when his teaching load was two lectures (6 hours per week) and two labs (6 hours per week) a quarter for three quarters of the year.

Dennis is a very good teacher. He brings the same energy and care to the classroom that he shows in his research. He has taught general chemistry, biochemistry, and several computational courses. He sometimes goes a little too fast and is sometimes too demanding of the students, but he gets very good student reviews. Without Dennis our computational chemistry curriculum would be quite different and quite possible would not exist. He is the only biochemist to construct and teach the biochemistry-related courses: Computational Biochemistry, Macromolecular Modeling, and Selected Topics in Protein Biochemistry. He also played a significant role in setting up the computational lab and selecting the software for it.

Dennis writes very well. His RTP documents, manuscripts, and his grant applications (I have reviewed two) are very well written. He also fits into the department easily; his social skills are excellent and he learns from mistakes and criticism.

I think Dennis would be an excellent addition to your program. He likes teaching, but perhaps not as much as we require. He would be far happier in a program that emphasized research. I also think he would be happier in an environment where he had more people to talk to that were directly in his area. We will be sorry to see him leave.

Sincerely,

Patrick W. Mobley

Professor of Chemistry

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