Molecular Medicine and Genetics

WAYNE STATE UNIVERSITY

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23 November 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. Committee Members;

I am writing to recommend Dr. Peter Uetz for a faculty position in your department. I have followed Dr. Uetz's work closely for a number of years and I believe he is an excellent and dedicated scientist with significant potential to continue as a successful independent investigator.

I am most familiar with the part of Peter's career that began when he moved to Stanley Fields's laboratory for his postdoctoral work. There he took up the challenge of high throughout protein interaction mapping using the yeast two-hybrid system. The goal was to map the binary interactions among the ~6,000 yeast proteins. The Fields laboratory had developed some high throughput screening methods and they had assembled the tools needed for the yeast project, but no one had ever tried such a large-scale screen. Peter's tremendous success in making the screens work earned him first authorship on a seminal Nature paper. This paper described the largest protein interaction dataset that had ever been collected for a single organism and spawned a flurry of diverse research from computational studies of protein networks to molecular and genetic dissection of individual pathways. The value of this data to the biological research community is reflected in the number of times his paper has been cited, which has it approaching the status of a citation classic.

Although the title of the Nature paper suggested that the interaction data was comprehensive, several analyses, including those by Peter himself, indicated that the screens had detected only a fraction of the possible interactions. Thus, when Peter moved to Germany he set up his laboratory to continue collecting interaction data for yeast. He is also beginning to take on other organisms, with a particular focus on viruses. Peter has demonstrated that he has the skills to manage functional genomics-scale projects. These skills include not only the specific technology he is using, but also the unique informatics, robotics, and people management

requirements of large-scale projects. I have no doubt that his laboratory will continue to produce data of the highest quality and significance.

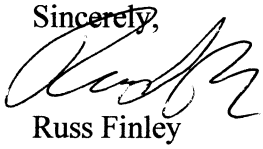
Peter is not content to just collect a lot of good data. He is genuinely interested in the biological insights that can be derived from high throughput data. In addition to his contributions to the original Nature paper, he wrote some of the first papers that carefully analyzed its importance. Peter has always been particularly interested in the intellectual challenges associated with analysis of functional genomics data. He is an original thinker and has made some key contributions to the way we look at protein interaction data.

I believe that Peter would make an excellent colleague. He is personable, forthright, and articulate. Having attended several of his seminars over the years leads me to believe that he would be an excellent teacher. He truly enjoys discussing science and he can be counted on for novel insights or suggestions in any discussion.

In summary, Peter is an outstanding scientist with tremendous potential to continue as a successful independent investigator and to be a leader in his field. I believe that he will make a positive impact on any department that he joins and I recommend him without reservation.

Please contact me if you need any additional information.

Sincerely,



Russ Finley