

Dr Christian Mullan
Directeur de Recherche

Paris, December, 11th, 2004

Dear Professor de Ruyter van Steveninck,

Gareth Witten and I have been involved since March 2000 in a number of research projects in biomathematics to try to understand the complexity of several biological systems. Firstly, my research team and I, working in the dynamics of large marine ecosystems of the Benguela region in South Africa, contributed to regular research meetings in biomathematics/biocomplexity that Gareth organized. Secondly, Gareth and I participated in establishing a joint project of my research group in France (GEODES) with his research team in mathematical biology in South Africa and attempted to develop a network of scientists (including the establishment of a graduate programme) in the development and use of complex systems tools and models for natural and social systems. Thirdly, Gareth and I have established research projects in modelling the interaction between the different immune system responses (humoral and cellular) and the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV).

Gareth is a very easy person, with a good image in the University of Cape Town, well appreciated by his students and his colleagues. He has specific qualities of organization, mainly method, dedication and human contact. He has recently been seconded to the African Institute for Mathematical Sciences where he is responsible for developing the graduate teaching programme and research programmes, one of which is his research group in mathematical immunology and epidemiology.

Gareth is an inquiring mind, with interests in various fields of biomathematics: networks dynamics, ecosystems dynamics. He masters the mathematical tools that are used in this area. He is very keen about the nature of applied mathematics, knowing how to avoid any drift towards toys models, establishing the appropriate balance between biological theory, experimental data and mathematical or computing tools.

I think that with this large and balanced spectrum of capacities, he has the potential of an original research, and would strongly support his application to a position of a junior Biocomplexity specialist in the Biocomplexity Institute at the Indiana University

Yours sincerely

Christian Mullan

