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MEDICINE

Department of Biochemistry

October 8, 2005

Dr. Yves Brun  
Department of Biology  
Indiana University  
Jordan Hall 142  
1001 E 3rd Street  
Bloomington, IN 47405-7005

Dear Professor Brun,

Dr. Dmitry Belostotsky has asked me to write a letter of reference in support of his application for a faculty position and I am delighted to do so. I am an Associate Professor in the Department of Biochemistry at the Emory University School of Medicine. I have been familiar with Dmitry's work for a number of years but it is only in the last two years that I have had the privilege of meeting him and interacting with him.

My first interaction with Dmitry came when his laboratory requested a number of yeast strains and plasmids from my laboratory. These reagents came from a paper that we had recently published and Dmitry was clearly eager to test a number of hypotheses using these novel reagents. His request for the reagents (a number of *Saccharomyces cerevisiae* strains and plasmids) was accompanied by a brief description of his plans and I was very interested in the experiments that he was proposing. As with numerous other requests, we sent the reagents off doubting that we would ever hear anything about the outcome of the proposed experiments. Much to my surprise, several months later I received a call out of the blue. It was Dmitry, reporting the interesting results of his experiments. He had used a mutant allele of the *NAB2* gene, which plays an as yet undefined role in polyadenylation for some tests of cross-species function of the *Arabidopsis* poly(A) binding protein (PABP). Although I have sent numerous reagents to laboratories through the years, this marked the FIRST time that I have ever received a call to report the outcome of the experiment. Dmitry really merely wished to call and tell me about some results that he had obtained with our mutant that he thought might be of interest to us. I asked him about the results of his experiments and we discussed them for some time. He was on the verge of submitting the paper containing these results and I offered to read the paper and provide my suggestions. He immediately sent me the paper and I read it with interest. The paper was excellent. It provided very important information that was presented in a very convincing manner. I read the paper very critically and provided Dmitry with my critique. He contacted me and we discussed my comments, which were fairly minor. Dmitry submitted the paper and it was accepted with only very minor changes. I really enjoyed interacting with Dmitry as a colleague. He was enthusiastic, insightful, and knowledgeable.

My initial interaction with Dmitry prompted me to think of him immediately when we became interested in the polyadenylation phenotype of some additional mutants that were of interest to



Emory University School of Medicine  
O. Wayne Rollins Research Center  
1510 Clifton Road  
Atlanta, Georgia 30322

The Robert W. Woodruff Health Sciences Center  
An equal opportunity, affirmative action university

Tel 404.727.5962  
Fax 404.727.2738

us. I called Dmitry and we realized that we were both planning to attend the Cold Spring Harbor Eukaryotic mRNA Processing Meeting (in 2004). We agreed to get together at the meeting and discuss a potential collaboration. At the meeting I had ample opportunity to interact with Dmitry. He presented both a poster and a talk. Both were clear and well presented. It was obvious from the questions posed to Dmitry after his talk that his colleagues in the RNA processing/poly-adenylation field really value his work. Dmitry and I met to discuss the collaborative experiments and once again it was a delight to talk to him. After listening to a brief description of our interests and our goals, Dmitry proposed several additional experiments. Some of these were experiments that he could accomplish in his own lab but others were experiments that we could easily do with the reagents we had at hand. The experiments had just not occurred to us. This interaction solidified my admiration of Dmitry and I am delighted that we have begun what I expect will be an ongoing collaboration.

As I mentioned above, I had read many of the papers Dmitry had published in the RNA processing field before our initial contact. Thus, I already respected him as a scientist before I got to know him as a scientist and as a colleague. I have now familiarized myself with his other work at SUNY Albany. He is clearly very involved both in education and in service to the Department and to the University. I spoke extensively with a former post-doc from his laboratory who is now a research scientist while we were at the Cold Spring Harbor meeting. She was extremely knowledgeable, articulate, and intelligent. If she is a reflection of the training obtained in the Belostotsky laboratory, then he clearly is an outstanding mentor in the laboratory.

Dmitry mentioned to me at the Cold Spring Harbor meeting that he was interested in finding a new position with a more dynamic environment. While Dmitry has done well at Albany, he was concerned about the difficulty of identifying individuals to work in the laboratory. He was also concerned about a lack of resources and other restrictions that make it difficult for him to pursue his research to his satisfaction. Given what Dmitry has accomplished at Albany, I can only imagine how successful he could be in a more research-oriented environment. It should be clear, however, that Dmitry is a dedicated teacher who is merely seeking a position at a University where he can combine his research efforts with his dedication to teaching in a manner in keeping with his goals. I actually spoke extensively to Dmitry about this topic when he called to ask me to write this letter. He made it very clear that he wants to continue teaching. He would just like to have more time and resources to dedicate to his research.

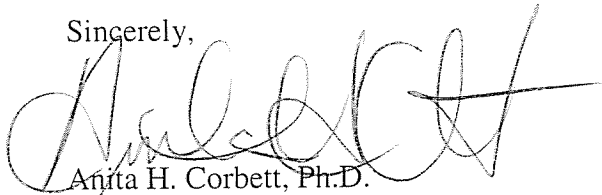
Dmitry's research is in the area of mRNA processing with some effort focused on polyadenylation. This is an extremely important question in the area of gene expression. It is a very highly conserved process that occurs in yeast to humans through very similar mechanisms. Dmitry has a unique approach to the problem in his combination of the plant and yeast model systems. The synergy between these systems has allowed him to make very important contributions and observations that would never have been reached by either working in the field because they relied on the cross-experimentation between the two model systems. Dmitry has several ongoing projects in the laboratory. These research areas as he has described them in his research proposal represent novel and important questions that need to be addressed in order to understand mechanisms of post-transcriptional gene regulation. Dmitry's combined use of the plant and yeast model system places him in a unique position to carry out the proposed research.

As evidence of the support for his approach, he recently successfully competed for R0-1 funding, certainly no small feat in this very competitive funding environment.

I had a recent opportunity to call on Dmitry for help with my own research. I submitted a new grant proposal in the area of mRNA processing. Although we have worked in this area for several years, this was my first proposal in this area. Given my naivety, I asked Dmitry to read my proposal for me and to make sure that I had not committed any egregious errors. I sent the proposal to him on a Friday afternoon and I received very detailed, critical, constructive, and insightful comments before the end of the weekend. He had commented not only on the specific technical details where I had sought his expertise, but he had also provided general feedback on the overall organization of the proposal. The comments were very helpful in reworking the proposal. I think this experience serves as strong evidence of what an outstanding colleague Dmitry would make.

In summary, I would like to recommend Dmitry Belostotsky with the highest enthusiasm. He is a dedicated scientist who could make very valuable contributions to any department he chooses to join. If our Department were recruiting, I would certainly encourage Dmitry to apply. He would be a delightful colleague to have in the office next door. Certainly our collaboration will continue regardless of whether he chooses to move or not. He is scientifically curious and intellectually savvy. I recommend him for the position in your Department with great enthusiasm and I urge you to give his application the most serious consideration. Please do not hesitate to contact me directly ([acorbe2@emory.edu](mailto:acorbe2@emory.edu) or 404-727-4546) if you require any further information about my enthusiastic support of Dmitry's application.

Sincerely,



Anita H. Corbett, Ph.D.

Associate Professor of Biochemistry