

November 30, 2005

Yves Brun
Systems Biology/Microbiology Faculty Search
Indiana University
Jordan Hall 142, 1001 E 3rd St
Bloomington, IN 47405-7005

RE: On-line Ref# 73583

Dear Search Committee:

This letter is written in strong support of **Dr. Chris Cretokos**. Chris is a postdoctoral fellow in Dr. Richard Behringer's lab. I know Chris very well through our collaborative studies on bat development. He is a wonderful person and an excellent scientist and I highly support his application for a faculty position in your department.

I have gotten to know Chris well on our trips to Trinidad to collect bat embryos. In the morning we go out to field sites to collect pregnant females and in the afternoon we go to a lab at the University of West Indies to process the samples and to perform experiments. Chris is a vital part of these expeditions, helping in all aspects of the work, and always with a smile and a wealth of knowledge and information.

Back at MD Anderson, Chris was the first in Richard's lab to embrace the bat project. This was a bold decision but a good one that has allowed him to establish his own "niche" in science. What I also really like is his ability to combine fun evo-devo studies in the bat with definitive molecular genetic studies in the mouse. Again, this is not a trivial undertaking but one that gives him a unique perspective on bat embryology. I'm sure Richard will outline these experiments more fully but they are a very nice test of the ability of a bat promoter element to drive expression in the mouse...and more importantly to drive changes in mouse skeletal development to a more "bat-like" state of elongated elements. These studies are exciting and provide the first definitive test in mammals of how changes in regulatory elements can lead to morphological changes that allow the acquisition of novel and functionally important traits.

Chris' work is careful and complete. He strives for the most beautiful and definitive results. He is a great team player yet he obviously also works independently and skillfully. His broad repertoire of experimental expertise and knowledge in model and non-model organisms allows him to conduct studies in a unique way that will serve him well in establishing his own laboratory and in obtaining grant funding.

Chris is a great colleague and he will bring a new outlook to any department that he joins. I recommend Chris Cretokos highly. Please contact me if I can be of further help.

Sincerely,



Lee Niswander, Ph.D.

Lee Niswander, Ph.D.
Associate Investigator

University of Colorado Health Sciences Center at Fitzsimons
Department of Pediatrics, Section of Developmental Biology
Bldg. RC-1 North, Room P18-4402E
P.O. Box 6511, Mailstop 8322, Aurora, Colorado 80045-0511
303.724.3790 • Fax 303.724.3792 • Lee.Niswander@uchsc.edu