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October 17, 2005

Yves Brun  
Systems Biology/Microbiology Faculty Search  
Department of Biology  
Indiana University  
Jordan Hall 142  
1001 E 3<sup>rd</sup> Street  
Bloomington, IN 47405-7005

Dear Dr. Brun:

I am pleased to write a letter of reference and support for Dr. Yanfen Hu who has applied for a position in your department. I am particularly glad to see Dr. Hu seeking an independent faculty research position since she is a highly talented and accomplished research scientist who has not chosen a traditional path to a career in science.

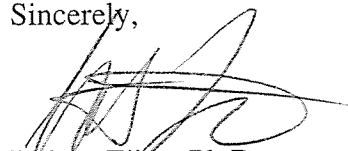
Dr. Hu started out as a graduate student with me 15 years ago. She joined our lab during the early period of Eukaryotic transcription research when the emphasis was to isolate and biochemically characterize the first few sequence specific enhancer binding factors. Dr. Hu wisely chose to work on a new class of transcriptional activators, the AP4 class – which was part of a series of key mammalian sequence specific DNA binding factors that was being discovered in our lab during the late 1980's. Along with Sp1, CTF, AP1 and AP2, AP4 turned out to be a particularly interesting enhancer recognition factor that revealed a novel mechanism for regulating alternative dimerization interactions. Not surprisingly, AP4, has since been extensively studied and implicated in a number of important biological pathways.

After completing her thesis, Dr. Hu spent a short postdoc period first at Genentech with Dr. David Goeddel and then a brief stay at Cold Spring Harbor Lab where she continued in the area of signal transduction. Before she could complete her Postdoc studies, she was compelled to move to the

University of Virginia where her husband Dr. Rong Li had been appointed as an Assistant Professor. Starting in 1996 Dr. Hu began as a research associate in Dr. Li's lab where she initiated her early studies of the breast cancer suppressor gene BRCA1. Her first contribution in this interesting and exciting new area of research was to show the involvement of BRCA1 (specifically the BRCT-domain) in chromatin remodeling and activation of DNA replication. Shortly thereafter, Dr. Hu struck out in her own independent research direction, to elucidate the underlying molecular mechanism by which the BRCA1 gene supports development of breast and ovarian cancer selectively in women. Although many workers in this highly competitive field have focused on the DNA repair function of BRCA1, Dr. Hu, capitalizing on her expertise with transcription factor biochemistry, has focused on the intriguing function of BRCA1 in cell-type specific regulation of key genes involved in promoting breast and ovarian cancer. Her elegant and sustained research over the past 8 years have led to a fascinating story in which BRCA1, in collaboration with various AP1/Jun factors, regulate the expression and activity of the key cancer promoting enzyme aromatase which is responsible for estrogen biosynthesis. Her recent highly successful studies following this original line of research have led her to a number of critical findings with significant implications for understanding the unique role of BRCA1 in promoting breast and ovarian cancer specifically in a gender and tissue specific manner.

Since 2002, Dr. Hu has been an Assistant Research Professor at the University of Virginia and in 2005, she was promoted to Associate Research Professor. Her recent evident accomplishments in breast/ovarian cancer research have allowed her to write a very strong NIH/R01 research proposal and there seems little doubt that Dr. Hu is on an upward trajectory to developing an original and productive independent research program. Thus, despite the unconventional route and the somewhat extended time line of her career – Dr. Hu has now clearly achieved a level of accomplishment, maturity and experience that would be most appropriate for an Assistant/Associate Professor at your institution. Indeed, I would say that she has been patient, deliberate and forcefully perseverant in pursuing an independent research and faculty position. Given her proven abilities and track record, I would say that your department would be most fortunate to recruit a candidate of Dr. Hu's accomplishments. I therefore recommend her to you with the highest enthusiasm.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Robert Tjian', written over a horizontal line.

Robert Tjian, Ph.D.

Professor of Molecular and Cell Biology