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4 October 2005

Yves Brun
Department of Biology
Indiana University
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Dear Yves,

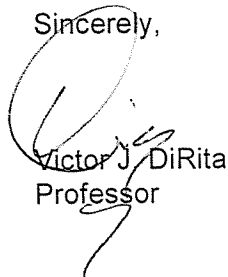
I am writing on behalf of Dr. Steve Juris, who is applying for a job in your Department. I have known Steve for about six years, since the time he applied for a slot on the pathogenesis training program here at Michigan, for which I serve as Director. Based on his graduate and undergraduate record, Steve was unanimously chosen as a top candidate for funding by the Program. He was an excellent participant in the training activities of the Program, and I saw him weekly at the journal club. In addition, I served on his thesis committee. My general assessment of Steve is that he is an extremely talented investigator with marvelous potential.

I first learned about his thesis work on the *Yersinia* YpkA protein from his thesis advisor Jack Dixon. When Jack told me about the YpkA story, he was clearly very enthusiastic about both the findings and the person who was making them. Undoubtedly Jack and Steve will elaborate on the work Steve did as a thesis student, which made a major contribution to understanding an unusual bacterial toxin, so I will not go into detail here. I heard Steve present the work on several occasions during its development and was always struck by what a terrific speaker he is; poised, thoughtful and prepared. He will be an excellent teacher.

Steve is a prolific experimentalist, and has a quick mind refined by an admirable knowledge of the literature. He is also full of perseverance and purpose, traits he will clearly be able to foster in his own students someday. As an example, when we met in the final stages of his Ph.D. training, around December of 2002, he presented data from his initial foray into the use of chemical genetics to identify the YpkA substrate. There was a little concern that the bioinformatic methodology he was using along with the chemical genetic approach would lead him down the wrong path; one committee member was adamant on this point. No doubt Steve was a little disheartened, but he kept plugging away and by his June defense he had added an enormous amount of new data regarding the substrate, using the methodology his committee member had been so concerned about.

Steve has been trained in two of the world's finest toxin research laboratories, and has developed an intriguing set of proposals on important problems that will take excellent advantage of this training. I think he is poised to become a serious contributor in the field of molecular pathogenesis. When he was a student here, Steve ranked among the top four or five of the dozens that I have been associated in the years I have been at Michigan. He is talented, serious and a very thoughtful, and will make a wonderful colleague. I give him my strongest recommendation.

Sincerely,



Victor J. DiRita
Professor