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18<sup>th</sup> October, 2005

Dear Dr. Brun,

It is a particular pleasure for me to write a letter in support of Rob Shanks's application for an Assistant Professorship in the Department of Biology. I taught Rob, I was a member of his thesis advisory committee and perhaps most important in terms of knowing him, my office was located just a few feet away from his lab bench so we were in close proximity for several years. Seeing him on a daily basis, I got a real feeling for him both as a scientist and as a person. At the outset, I will just say that he is a great person, well-balanced, highly enthusiastic and very bright. At first I thought he might be a bit on the quiet side but that is not at all the case. He loves to talk about science and life in general. In graduate school, Rob developed into an outstanding scientist. He gained a deep understanding of yeast genetics under Dean Dawson's tutelage. His Ph.D. research was of the highest quality resulting in important published work. His research seminars were among the very best, a product of clear thinking and practice. In this respect, he carried on a tradition established by Dawson students which was to give the clearest and best talks in the department – a practice strongly encouraged by Dean who led by example. There is no doubt that this training has prepared Rob to be a highly effective teacher. He is creative, interactive and interested in many different areas of science. It is obvious that his deep knowledge of yeast genetics is going to be of considerable value in his studies of bacterial communities and biofilm formation. This is evidenced by his "yeast-based tool kit for manipulation of gram negative genes. This kind of cross-fertilization is what leads to novel approaches to solving challenging problems.

I have been a faculty member at Tufts for 38 years so have seen many students pass through our program. Rob clearly belongs in the group who have gone on to establish themselves in academic careers. I believe he has all of the qualities necessary to make a first rate researcher/teacher. I would not hesitate to accept him as a colleague in my own department. I recommend Rob to you with the very highest enthusiasm.

Yours sincerely,

Andrew Wright, Ph.D.  
Professor