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Yves Brun
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Department of Biology, Indiana University
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Re: **John Kirby**


10/19/2005

Dear Dr. Brun:

I am writing to lend my strongest possible support to the pending application of Dr. John Kirby for a position in your department. I have known John since his days as a graduate student with Dr. George Ordal, with whom we were collaborating in the mid-1990's. I followed his work closely then, during his years as a post-doctoral fellow with David Zusman, and during his years at Georgia State. I have heard him present his work several times and we saw each other every couple of years, at least, at the BLAST conferences. Thus, I am quite familiar with John both as a scientist and an individual. In all respects, he represents everything we hope for in a colleague. Unlike many applicants for an Assistant Professorship, John already has established an outstanding track record both in research and teaching. His lab is well funded with an RO1 grant from NIH that supports his work on Myxobacterial signaling. This line of investigation has been exceptionally productive as evidenced by both published and the many in preparation manuscripts. He also seeks to return to the study of *Bacillus subtilis* chemotaxis. There is still a tremendous amount to be done in this system and no one is better trained and in a better position to continue this work than John. On a personal level, John is very easy to communicate with, exudes enthusiasm for science, and is highly respected by graduate students both in his own and neighboring laboratories. He is clearly an outstanding candidate. My only regret is that we do not currently have an opening in our department.

Please contact me if I can provide any additional information.

Sincerely



John Helmann
Professor of Microbiology
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Ithaca NY
607-255-6570

OAK RIDGE NATIONAL LABORATORY

MANAGED BY UT-BATTELLE FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

THE UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE



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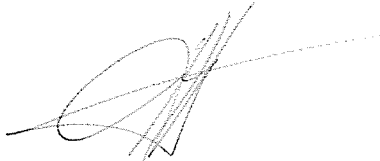
Dear Dr. Brun:

I am writing this letter in support of Dr. John Kirby who has applied for a faculty position in your department. He is an excellent experimental microbiologist and a great colleague. All I can say is that it was a real pleasure to interact with John on a daily basis for the last few years. I am sure other references who are better positioned to judge John's experimental work will comment extensively on his professional qualities, so I will limit my remarks to a statement that I am looking forward to continue our collaboration regardless of John's geographical location. My laboratory will provide him with the state-of-the-art computational support for his current project on *Myxococcus xanthus* (we are currently working on a joint manuscript) and for the project on *Bacillus subtilis* he wishes to establish. John clearly understands the advantage of using computational predictions to drive experimental work and he also demonstrated an interest in the other side of a computational coin – modeling. His recent paper with Adam Arkin was one of the first examples of using the systems biology approach in prokaryotic signal transduction. I am sure that John will continue to benefit from his interactions with computational biologists in order to complete a transition from purely hypothesis-driven research to design-driven research. As his colleague, I would like to stress that John is extremely supportive and considerate when it comes to needs of students and faculty. We served together on several committees at Georgia Tech and I always appreciated his comments and overall involvement. He is always constructive and helpful. In times when graduate recruitment suffered significant setback, John was able to attract and retain several excellent students in his laboratory. I think he is genuinely liked by everyone in the diverse and somewhat complex department.

I believe that John and I share some frustration over recent developments in the School of Biology at Georgia Tech that significantly diminish the role of Microbiology. I believe that we both came to Georgia Tech on a promise that Microbiology will be part of the Tech biology expansion, and it was sad to realize that this is not happening. This was one of the reasons for my own departure earlier this year, and I am not surprised that John is searching for a program that would be more suitable for his research and for which he would be a better fit.

I strongly recommend John Kirby as a candidate for this position. Please do contact me if you would like me to expand on any point raised.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Igor B. Zhulin', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Igor B. Zhulin, PhD
Associate Professor,
Department of Microbiology,
University of Tennessee and
Senior R&D Staff Member,
Computer Science & Mathematics Division,
Oak Ridge National Laboratory