



October 23, 2005

Recommendation for John Richard Kirby:

I am pleased to recommend John Kirby for an Assistant Professor position in Microbial Physiology. I met John while he was a Ph.D. student at the University of Illinois. Although he was working on his Ph.D. in George Ordal's lab in Biochemistry, John did some experiments in my lab during his last year in graduate school. In addition, I was on his Ph.D. committee. I have seen him speak at international meetings, I have reviewed manuscripts and grant proposals he has submitted, and I have talked with him at great length about science. Thus, I can comment on John's abilities from many different perspectives.

John is smart, experimentally adept, and enthusiastic about science. His Ph.D. research involved some very nice molecular genetics. His careful biochemistry disproved an entrenched dogma about how adaptation occurs during chemotaxis in *Bacillus* — yielding an intellectually and technically impressive dissertation and several excellent first author manuscripts. His graduate advisor is very smart but has a nonchalant, hands-off approach to mentoring the students in his lab. To be successful in Ordal's group requires self-motivation and the ability to work independently. John clearly demonstrated these abilities. John's enthusiasm and work ethic also motivated other graduate students and undergraduate research students in Ordal's lab and left a lasting impression on Ordal's research group.

John is broadly interested in science. He was one of very few graduate students attended both the Biochemistry seminar program (an expectation because he is a graduate student in that department) and the Microbiology seminar program (which was not a requirement for Biochemistry students). Furthermore, he was one of few graduate students who regularly asked questions after seminars. Because his graduate work focused almost entirely on molecular and biochemical experiments, he audited my microbial genetics class to learn more genetics. In addition, he interacted closely with my lab both intellectually and experimentally. John and I actually did some fluorescence microscopy experiments together, so I had a first-hand opportunity to observe John's experimental expertise.

I have talked with John many times since he left for his postdoc as well as other scientists at UC Berkeley who have had the opportunity to follow his progress. Based both upon our discussions and the evaluations of colleagues from UC Berkeley, I am convinced that John independently made unpredicted, important contributions toward elucidating the role of chemotaxis homologues in *Myxococcus* — the work he has continued as an Assistant Professor in Georgia. John has published several excellent papers on this topic and is clearly moving into exponential phase. The grant proposal reviewed by the notoriously difficult MBC1 study section received an extremely good score, and was one of the very few proposals by new assistant professors that was funded by this group.

In short, I am confident that John will be a productive independent scientist, an interactive colleague, and an excellent teacher. And he has a friendly personality to boot. In short, this guy is really, really good! I strongly recommend him.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Stanley Maloy". The signature is written in a dark ink and is positioned below the word "Sincerely,".

Stanley Maloy, Ph.D.
Director, Center for Microbial Sciences
Professor of Microbiology