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Yves Brun
Systems Biology/Microbiology Faculty search
Dept. Biology, Indiana University,
Bloomington IN 47405-7005 USA
October 7, 2005.

RE: Letter of reference for job candidate, Dr. Sandra Schulze

Dear Dr Brun:

Sandra is without a doubt the most talented grad student that I have ever supervised. For me, the first indicator of her abilities was her performance in her qualifying semester—after being away from science in a parallel, successful career involving music teaching and performing, Sandra got A+ grades in all three courses she was required to take in her qualifying semester. I have never seen this kind of result in my 20+ years here.

In terms of research, Sandra made incredibly valuable contributions to our lab. She is a very impressive “natural” at the bench, both with molecular and genetic work. Thus she set up a genetic screen for components of vesicle transport, as well as complex crosses to show that one of the 3L heterochromatic genes is a trithorax group gene called verthandi. She was the key person in sorting out a number of problems (past mistakes) with the genetics and cloning of sequences in 3L, and as a result she was the first author on our paper describing the genetics of the region. She also made key contributions to the characterization of a new GST gene in Drosophila, and is first author on two manuscripts involving her work with two genes deep in 3L heterochromatin, as well as co-author on a review outlining our work in these hard-to-work-with regions of chromosomes. Her work and experience to date--on vesicle transport, trithorax regulatory genes, genes/genomics in heterochromatic regions of the genome, and now cell structure (nuclear lamins) and its relation to human disease—is centrally positioned in several “hot” themes in biomedical research today.

Sandra has personal qualities which make her an outstanding scientist, and a great teacher. She is extremely bright, highly motivated (from her background as a mature student), and incredibly hard working, so much so that I occasionally had to suggest that she was working too hard and maybe should take a break. Sandra is a “retentive” perfectionist, which means that she is very well suited to an academic career—she is highly organized, very tidy, and does everything extremely thoroughly. She has a wide range of talents and abilities, and sense of “perspective” obtained as a mature student---this made her an exceptional Teaching Assistant in my DNA lab course. She gives a superb “performance” in a lecture format (having taught and performed as a professional musician for many years), but is appropriately down-to-earth and empathic in a one-on-one situation. She speaks and writes very well, although her background in the Arts sometimes “colors” her writing more than I would myself. In spite of her drive and intensity, she is a pleasant person, easy to work with and has an excellent sense of humour.

To summarize, I believe that she would be an outstanding asset to any institution, and I would recommend her most highly. If you have further questions, please feel free to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Barry" followed by a stylized flourish.

Barry Honda, Professor