



University of Pittsburgh

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Search Committee
Indiana University

October 29, 2005

Dear Chairperson of the Search Committee:

I am writing this letter to express my strong support for the application of **Dr. Debraj GuhaThakurta** for an Assistant Professor position (tenure track) in your University.

I am an Assistant Professor in the Department of Computational Biology, School of Medicine, University of Pittsburgh with joint appointments at the Department of Human Genetics, Graduate School of Public Health and the University of Pittsburgh Cancer Institute (UPCI), School of Medicine. My background is on Mathematics (undergraduate) and molecular biology (graduate) and I have worked on the development of Bioinformatics tools for the past fourteen years. Currently, in my laboratory, we develop computational algorithms and biochemical techniques to study the specific recognition of the DNA regulatory regions (both *in vivo* and *in vitro*) by transcription factors as well as perform comparative genome analysis.

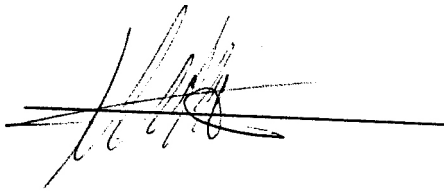
I came to know Dr. GuhaThakurta during the time that I was a post-doctoral Research Associate in Prof. Stormo's laboratory in Washington University in St. Louis. During the 2.5 years we worked together, I was impressed by the depth of his scientific knowledge which spanned different disciplines. During his presentations in group meetings, journal clubs, etc, he was responding to the questions/comments of the audience without hesitation, indicating that he was familiar with his own work as well as that of other people in the field. Moreover, he was able to quickly grasp a new topic and adjust it into his research. Dr. GuhaThakurta developed program *CO-BIND*, which was one of the first programs to successfully address the problem of co-operative binding of transcription factors in the promoters of the genes. This program is freely available to the scientific community (both academia and industry) from the ftp site of the Washington University in St. Louis. He also wrote the necessary software that allows anyone to use this program "hassle-free" *via* the world-wide web.

After the completion of his post-doctoral work at the laboratory of Gary Stormo, he joined the *Rosetta Inpharmatics*, where he became Senior Research Scientist in the Genetics and Informatics Research Groups. While at *Rosetta Inpharmatics*, he developed statistical methods and visualization tools for the analysis and annotation of the human and mouse genomes. Interestingly, during the past years, he continued publishing his research results in reputable scientific journals, something that is not very common for the researchers of the corporate world.

In conclusion, I believe that given the opportunity, Dr. GuhaThakurta's qualities and his interdisciplinary background and training will make him an excellent researcher in your Institute.

If you think that I can be of any further help, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Takis Benos', written over a horizontal line.

Panagiotis (Takis) Benos, Ph.D.
University of Pittsburgh