

October 28, 2005

Dr. Yves Brun
Systems Biology/Microbiology Faculty Search
Department of Biology
Indiana University
Jordan Hall 142
1001 E 3rd Street
Bloomington, IN 47405-7005

Dear Dr. Brun:

This letter is to recommend **Allison Mallory** for the tenure track position in the Biology Department at Indiana University. Allison carried out her doctoral studies in my laboratory, beginning in the fall semester of 1998 and successfully defending her dissertation in the fall semester of 2002. Overall, I think her career has been impressive. Academically, she is talented and motivated and scored at the top of her graduate class in her first year course work. More importantly, she has shown a passion and an ability for hands on research that have resulted in very high quality work reflected in both her publications and her dissertation. Her work during her first semester of graduate school (while taking a full load of graduate level courses) resulted in an authorship on a paper published in the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*. In her second year she became author on a manuscript published in *Science*. During her last two years of graduate school she published three first author papers and these were the basis of her dissertation. Each paper has made a significant impact in the field of RNA silencing, an ancient conserved pathway in eukaryotic organisms with high potential for practical applications in both plants and animals. The first paper describes a set of innovative experiments on the nature of the RNA silencing signal and was published in *The Plant Cell*. This paper was one of the most cited recent papers in the field of Plant & Animal Science and was featured as a "hot new paper" on the ISI website (<http://esi-topics.com/nhp/2003/march-03-VickieVance.html>). The second paper was published in the prestigious journal *Nature Biotechnology* and reported an experimental approach to produce high levels of beneficial proteins of economic or medical importance in tobacco or other plants. The last first author paper from this lab was published in the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* and shows a link between the RNA silencing pathway and the newly discovered microRNA pathway. This paper was viewed as a high-impact contribution and was featured on the cover of the journal. Overall, Allison's graduate work was consistently of the highest quality and her dissertation was the

best that I have seen in the last decade here in the Department of Biological Sciences at the University of South Carolina.

Since her graduation, Allison has gone on to do post-doctoral work with David Bartel at the Whitehead Institute working on functional aspects of plant microRNAs. Since her post-doc is in my area, I remain aware of her progress. As in her graduate career, Allison has been hardworking and productive in the Bartel lab; publishing six papers in the three years she has spent there, four research papers on which she is first author, a middle author research publication and a review in *Current Opinion in Plant Biology*. Overall, I believe Allison has the native talent, intelligence, and drive to be among the most successful research scientists of her generation. I think she is ready and able to begin her career as an independent investigator and that it will be as successful as her graduate and post-graduate terms have been. I give her my highest recommendation and think you would find her a capable and valuable colleague.

Sincerely,
Vicki Vance
Professor