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October 17, 2005

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

Dear Dr. Brun,

I enthusiastically submit my recommendation of Dr. Jeff Marcus for the Systems Biology/Microbiology faculty position in the Department of Biology at Indiana University. I had the privilege of getting to know Jeff during the last couple of years of his graduate work at Duke University. During this time he became involved in the newly developed Certificate in Teaching College Biology program at Duke, of which I am the director. This program aims to aid in the professional development of graduate students, specifically in the area of teaching, who hope to become faculty members. Jeff was awarded the Certificate based on his completion of several categories of work designed to enhance his teaching ability. I find that Jeff possesses intelligence and thoughtfulness in all of his endeavors, a sincere passion for learning and teaching, and a strong work ethic. Of all of the graduate students I have worked with during my time at Duke, Jeff holds the most potential to make a significant impact as a faculty member.

What stands out most in my mind about Jeff is his ability to think clearly and analyze situations. Most of the graduate students I work with are incredibly intelligent; Jeff is no exception. But Jeff distinguishes himself among his peers in his ability to break down abstract issues into more understandable terms and also to synthesize among related abstract issues to draw conclusions that others miss. While this ability of Jeff's comes out even in short conversations with him, a more specific example comes from his teaching portfolio submitted as the final step in completing the Certificate in Teaching College Biology. In a portion of the portfolio called the Reflective Commentary, Jeff reflected on his teaching experiences up to that point. He discussed his work as a Laboratory Demonstrator at Cambridge University, a Teaching Assistant at Duke University, and an adjunct instructor at Elon University. After describing his roles and responsibilities in each of these jobs, he eloquently commented on the differences among the various student bodies, speculated about why this might be, and discussed how this impacted his job as a teacher in each situation. Furthermore, he described how reflecting on these

experiences led him to learn more about pedagogical methods and philosophy. This thoughtful approach to complex issues will enable Jeff to positively impact any arena to which he contributes – whether it be the research laboratory or the classroom.

Jeff adds to his intellect and thoughtfulness a passion for learning and teaching. Jeff is intrigued by the world around him and consistently seeks to understand it. I had the pleasure of having Jeff as a student in my class called *Seminar in Teaching Biology*. One of the assignments for the class was to write a statement of teaching philosophy, and I was intrigued to read Jeff's paper. In this statement, he described how his enthusiasm for biological questions arose when he was very young and how he came to realize that his job as a teacher is to help students discover a similar enthusiasm about biology. Jeff has realized the value of experiential learning, and as a teacher he will strive to create the type of learning environment that makes biology come alive for students. Given what I know about Jeff, he will succeed.

Finally, Jeff possesses a strong work ethic; he works incredibly hard and cooperates with others to make their work easier and more enjoyable. I have found this to be true through formal interactions with Jeff in the Certificate program and through informal interactions as a colleague in the same academic department. Jeff fulfills his commitments on time and thoroughly. When he has questions, he asks them straightforwardly. If he sees a way that he can assist his colleagues in their work, he does so without hesitation. Certainly Jeff possesses the intelligence that drives many like him to extreme egotism, but, in contrast, Jeff's nature is characterized by humility and collegiality.

In summary, Jeff Marcus sets himself apart from his peers with his clear thinking, passion for learning and teaching, and strong work ethic. I have no doubt that Jeff will continue to distinguish himself by making a notable contribution to his department, institution, and, more broadly to his discipline and the teaching profession.

Sincerely,



Paula P. Lemons, Ph.D.

Assistant Professor of the Practice of Biology

Biology Department
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The Spirit Makes the Master

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

September 28, 2005

Dear Dr. Brun and Members of the Search Committee:

I am delighted to enthusiastically recommend Dr. Jeffrey Marcus for the Experimental and Computational Systems Biology position at Indiana University.

First and foremost, Dr. Marcus is an outstanding biologist who works with a variety of models in evolutionary biology and genetics. His background, training and research are very diverse and for this reason, he is a member of both the biotechnology and the biodiversity centers in our department. The endpoints of Jeff's interests and training are wider than most, and you will find him to be extremely knowledgeable and broadly trained. This breadth brings a remarkable perspective to his work and makes him an especially valued colleague when it comes to discussing an idea or collaborating on a grant or suggesting a study for a student.

Dr. Marcus is just beginning his third year in the Biology Department at Western Kentucky University. Upon his arrival, he quickly developed a most successful genetics course and laboratory. The course was well conceived, and it was well received by his students. As a first time preparation, it was remarkable that he managed to not only design a creative lab where students mapped heretofore-unmapped genes, but he also published the laboratory in a respected journal. Truly, this is a fine example of the scholarship of pedagogy.

In spite of a new job in a new setting with new teaching preparations, Jeff also established an active research program, collaborating with colleagues and supervising several undergraduate research projects. The projects went well and the students enjoyed the experience. It was clear from the day that he arrived on campus that Jeff is a committed scientist who has an uncanny knack for working with students. His lab is full of energetic students because he does a superb job at motivating and supervising them. He senses how and when to help, and is there to ensure that students of diverse interests and abilities are maximally successful.

Without a doubt, Jeff Marcus is an outstanding scientist. His list of publications in fine journals is remarkable and I have every reason to believe this is the beginning of an outstanding and creative career. I enjoy and profit from his thoughtful ideas and stimulating discussions. He is meticulous in designing creative experiments, tireless in collecting and analyzing data and driven to complete the

project for publication. When Jeff embarks on a project, it will be completed and published in a fine journal. I am continually impressed with his generation of ideas and follow through in terms of data.

Jeff is easy to get along and work with and has an amazing sensitivity to students, colleagues and others. I was most impressed that he catalyzed and wrote several major collaborative grants in his first year. He judges others by their strengths and shows an empathy that is all too rare in academe today. He is positive, non-confrontational, and has a sense of fairness that makes him a delight as a colleague.

As impressive as his past accomplishments are, they are not as important as his promise for the future. It is my best prediction that he will only continue to grow as an exceptional scientist and colleague. Please understand that I would not be writing this enthusiastic a letter if I did not feel so strongly about him as a scholar, teacher and colleague. He is one of the brightest and intellectually engaging folks I have encountered in a long time. He works well with students of all levels and in a variety of situations; he teaches with skill and sensitivity to students; and he knows and likes both teaching and research. We are lucky to have Jeff at WKU and while I will be very sorry to see him go, I believe that the Experimental and Computational Systems Biology position at Indiana is tailored for his interests and abilities.

Dr. Jeffrey Marcus is an outstanding scientist, fine teacher and excellent colleague, and my recommendation is enthusiastic and unreserved. If I can provide any additional information, please feel free to call (270-745-3697 or email Richard.Bowker@wku.edu).

Very sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Richard G. Bowker". The signature is written in dark ink and has a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

Richard G. Bowker
Professor and Head
Department of Biology