

The University of New Mexico

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10 October, 2005

Dear Search Committee:

This is a most enthusiastic letter of recommendation for **Dr. Van M. Savage**, who is applying for a position within your department. I know Van well. He worked with Geoffrey West, me, and our informal “biological scaling group” that operates out of the Santa Fe Institute (SFI), University of New Mexico, and Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL). Van started as a SFI/NSF graduate student intern, and then, after receiving his Ph. D. in physics from Washington University, he returned for two years as a SFI/LANL postdoc. Since then he has taken a second postdoc at the Bauer Center for Genomics Research at Harvard. Van is one of four outstanding postdocs who have worked with us in the last seven years. All have made unique, absolutely essential contributions to our scaling research. Van is first author or co-author of written multiple papers by our group, and we are still working on a couple of important collaborative manuscripts.

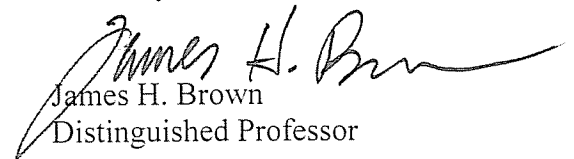
Van stands out from the other postdocs in this group because of his background in physics. More important than the direct applications physics to biology - and Van has helped us make these - are the kinds of analytical thinking and the mathematical and modeling expertise that he has brought to our collaboration. In the process, Van has learned a tremendous amount of biology. After his experience with us and at Bauer, he now has acquired almost the level of biological knowledge that one would expect from a postdoc trained in some biological discipline. More importantly, however, he also has the physics background and the creativity, knowledge, and skills to make enormous, invaluable contributions as a collaborator in an interdisciplinary research group. He has played a lead role in about seven projects, including published papers on scaling of metabolic rate in mammals and population growth, as well as work in progress on scaling

of cell size and genome size (all relevant to cancer and/or other human health issues). Since leaving our group and taking a postdoctoral position in the interdisciplinary physics/biology program at the Bauer Center at Harvard, Van seems to be continuing to do excellent work and to be very productive.

In addition to his stellar scientific background, skills, and abilities, Van is an absolutely wonderful collaborator. His major professor once remarked to me that "Van isn't nasty enough to be a first-rate theoretical physicist." Well if that is true, physics' loss is biology's gain. Van has a delightful, low-key, interactive personality that makes him a delight to work with. He accepts leadership and responsibility readily, and comes through with quality results on time. He is so valuable that West and I are trying to keep him involved in our scaling work. He seems destined for a stellar academic career. I am confident that he will also be a terrific teacher of undergraduates and mentor of graduate and postdoctoral students.

So, I recommend Van Savage most enthusiastically and without reservation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "James H. Brown". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right.

James H. Brown
Distinguished Professor