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October 24, 2005

Yves Brun  
Systems Biology/Microbiology Faculty Search  
Department of Biology; Indiana University  
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To the Search Committee:


I am very pleased to recommend **Dr. Robert Stahelin** for a faculty position in your Department. He has the technical skills, intellectual versatility, and reliability to do an excellent job in carrying out independent research and teaching and in supervising others.

Even though he is in a different professor's faculty group, I know Mr. Stahelin very, very well. I was on his Ph.D. committee, and his presentation was clearly one of the most comprehensive thesis I have ever seen. It was a true thesis, with multiple hypotheses tested even as he worked to develop the requisite techniques for himself and others in Wonhwa's group. Wonhwa will, of course, make more insightful comments into Rob's research work. But I know from observing him that Rob has already moved well into the role of a group leader, helping to direct projects whether they are "his" or not. This bodes very, very well for his ability to lead a research program of his own. My only concern is his need to come into his own in creating projects, but his command of the literature, theory, and technique make that concern a minor one.

I have also worked with Rob as a collaborator on an education research projects, including published work in the *Journal of Biochemical and Molecular Biology Education (BAMBED)*. This collaboration began when he and Wonhwa approached me for work in evaluating the changes they had made in our undergraduate biochemistry lab. I quickly found that they had designed a genuinely innovative, project-based laboratory program. Our research on the program found that students were advancing significantly in their command of the ideas and the techniques of research biochemistry, all within the context of an interesting research-like problem. In addition, Rob has worked with me to provide an interesting scenario on protein-ligand binding for our *Working with Chemistry* general chemistry lab manual.

My personal evaluation of Dr. Stahelin is very high, also. Although he did not change groups for his post-doc, something I attribute to his advisor more than to him, he has already done work that is independent. He is a genuine leader, and will have no trouble, I think, in setting up his own group. His teaching will be innovative and research-based as well. I strongly recommend him for your consideration.

Yours truly,



Donald Wink  
Professor

**UIC**

# VCU Fax

V i r g i n i a C o m m o n w e a l t h U n i v e r s i t y

October 31<sup>st</sup>, 2005

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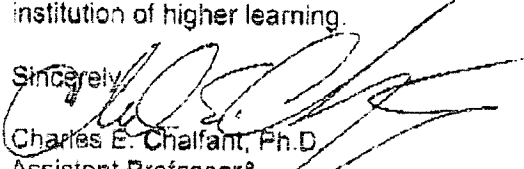
Dear Dr. Bennett,

It is with great pleasure that I recommend Dr. Robert Stahelin ("Rob") for a faculty position in your department. Rob has been a collaborator of mine for the last three years examining the role of ceramide-1-phosphate in the activation of cPLA<sub>2</sub>. In our tenure together, Rob has demonstrated exemplary ethics and problem solving skills. In fact, I have found no other scientist to match Rob's abilities in the types of biophysical studies that he excels. Furthermore, he trained in one of the best laboratories on protein-membrane interactions in the country. He has been a great asset to both my laboratory group and me. At a personal level, Rob has the highest degree of integrity and is an extremely collegial and nice person.

Basically, I can go on and on about how great he is, but let's be frank. Rob will be successful! He works independently of Dr. Cho ("Wonhwa"), has all of the skills to be a successful scientist, demonstrates excellent writing abilities, and has goals! He does not have a "defeatist" attitude, will never concede, and not take no from NIH for an answer. He will aspire to the best of his abilities to obtain extramural funding. Thus, his only criticism could be a lack of experience in writing grants, which all of us usually had when obtaining our first faculty position. On the other hand, Wonhwa has also mentored him in grant writing (Wonhwa's success is quite impressive), and thus, he is more than ready to obtain his first grant.

In conclusion, Rob will be a great asset to any department, and *I am currently trying recruit him to my department here at Virginia Commonwealth University*. Thus, I debated (at least one minute) about whether to give him a glowing recommendation, but Rob deserves and has earned a choice of faculty positions so he can choose the best match. I have no doubt that Rob will excel in all endeavors he pursues. Overall, Rob is an outstanding scientist and very deserving of a faculty position at any institution of higher learning.

Sincerely,



Charles E. Chalfant, Ph.D.  
Assistant Professor &  
Health Science Specialist-(GS13)  
McGuire VA Medical Center