

Paris, October 12, 2005

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Systems Biology/Microbiology Faculty Search
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LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION FOR DR. ERIC J. STEWART

Dear Professor Brun,

I rarely have been in the position to write a recommendation letter for a senior scientist of the caliber of E. J. Stewart. Short of the number of publications (whatever significance your Search Committee decides to attach to that), everything I have to say about my colleague Eric Stewart is in superlatives. I shall argue that even this "handicap" of having published a small number of papers reflects the high standards of a true scientist. If he chose to stay in France I would have made all effort to get him a tenured position.

Eric came from a superb school of science, that of Jon Beckwith at the Harvard Medical School. I am indebted to Jon for having chosen my lab for his favorite graduate student because my laboratory, and me personally, have immensely profited from his almost six years work with us. I shall simply list the superlatives about Eric as an outstanding scientist and dear colleague; if I shall miss something, it will be due to my forgetfulness rather than hiding of a weakness on his part. (Maybe I should mention that my own scientific criteria are rather high since my own scientific "imprinting" was with mentors such as Matt Meselson, Wally Gilbert, Jim Watson, Marc Ptashne etc?).

Eric is in full scientific maturity: he corrected my thinking more often than I did his; he is brilliant, very much at ease with most complicated theoretical concepts while being a hard working imaginative experimentalist. Nobody before him has enriched my lab with methodological and technological innovations as he did. He is as much at ease with microbiological "tooth-picking" as with computer programs for image processing. He has introduced the most powerful automated microscopy, something he had no experience with himself beforehand. He is a generous, patient and efficient teacher for junior scientists always available for "free" help and advice. Scientifically, his criteria are really high – those of the world's best scientists. That explains his drive to the completion of the research projects rather than breaking up the work to produce numerous papers. In that respect, he could be put forward as an example to many well-known senior scientists. He has achieved in this laboratory a number of ground breaking results in an area of science where microbiology, genetics, cell biology and

evolutionary theory intertwine in a multidisciplinary network. Eric is able to design and carry out his own projects, work well with his students, create and stimulate collaborations with other laboratories. By doing this, he has secured internationally competitive funds for our laboratory. Eric will be a great asset to any department. His single-cell based approach will fit well with the research in your own Department and provide great opportunities for collaborations. His enthusiasm to help and insightfulness will be a boon to other scientists in your department.

He will be publishing at least three more top scientific papers from the material he produced as the result of his personal work, and by playing a key role in collaborations both within the lab and with other labs. Because he developed his projects and their experimental designs by investing a lot of his time and energy, I am happy to see him taking his scientific "investments" with him to your department. There is nothing a senior scientist and teacher needs to do that Eric is not excelling in! Given this, it is clear that I, and my senior and junior colleagues, are incredibly sorry to lose him, but his own happiness is what I care most about. I hope it will be with your department.

I recommend highly Dr. Eric Stewart for a tenured faculty position in the microbiology program within the Department of Biology and the Biocomplexity Institute at the University of Indiana. Such a position will allow him to make outstanding contributions to the modern multidisciplinary science of microbiology and to its many health-related issues. I can only be friendly envious to you and your department if you will wisely choose to offer him the desired faculty position.

M. Radman

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