

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

October 27, 2005

Dear Dr. Brun,

I am writing this letter in support of Dr. Maria Diakonova's application for a faculty position in your Department. I have known Maria for about 20 years. Initially, our interaction was limited to intermittent communication at scientific meetings, first in Russia and then in USA. Subsequently, our interaction became more extensive, mostly because of mutual interest in each other's work, experience and opinion. More recently, we have completed a collaborative project, during which I had a chance to become even more familiar with Maria's scientific knowledge, attitude and abilities. Therefore, I feel that I am in a good position to offer my opinion concerning her qualification for this position.

Dr. Diakonova is a creative and gifted scientist working at the cutting edge of modern cell biology. Her specific expertise is at an interface between signal transduction and functions of the cytoskeleton and she has a number of significant accomplishments in this area. During last few years Dr. Diakonova worked in the laboratory of Dr. Carter Su, which is strongly focused on investigating the signal transduction mechanisms in response to growth hormone. Maria has brought to the lab a lot of cell biological techniques, which were novel for this signaling lab and which were extremely beneficial for the ongoing research. She also initiated and developed her own direction of research within the lab, the major goal of which was to link signaling pathways to functions of the actin cytoskeleton. These efforts were very successful and allowed Dr. Diakonova to obtain her own funding and further develop her research.

The experimental skills of Dr. Diakonova are superb. She is familiar with an amazingly broad range of techniques and never hesitates to learn another one if it can help her to resolve a problem. Maria is extremely well organized, energetic, and highly motivated. She has all necessary knowledge, competence and creativity to become one of the most valuable additions to any scientific department. I believe she will have an outstanding career in academic science. I strongly support her application for the position of Assistant Professor and believe that she is an excellent candidate for this position.

Sincerely,

Tatyana Svitkina  
Assistant Professor  
Department of Biology  
University of Pennsylvania