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Biocomplexity Faculty Search Committee
c/o Prof. Rob de Ruyter van Steveninck,
Biocomplexity Institute
Indiana University
Swain Hall West 117
Bloomington IN, 47405-7105
U.S.A.

Groningen, November 11, 2003

Our ref: AM/hr-03-02i



Dear Prof. De Ruyter:

I fully support the application of Dr. Ronen Zangi for a faculty position at the Biocomplexity Institute, Indiana University. Dr. Zangi initially joined the Molecular Dynamics group here in Groningen in 1999 on a 2 year Marie Curie personal postdoctoral fellowship, a highly competitive funding program of the European Community. I was keen to hold Dr. Zangi in the group after his fellowship and thus now pay him from various grants.

Ronen Zangi is a very capable scientist. He has a solid physical chemistry background, which is combined with a good appreciation for biological systems a highly desirable combination. The breadth of his knowledge and ability is reflected in the types of projects with which he has been involved while in Groningen. Specifically he has worked on the folding of the protein SC3 hydrophobin at a hydrophobic/hydrophilic interface, on understanding the barrier to unfolding of a lung surfactant protein, on the refinement of methodology for free energy calculations in drug design and on the behaviour of water under confinement. Currently, Ronen is also investigating the aggregation of gel forming synthetic peptides as a possible model for highly controlled protein-protein interactions and is performing simulations to understand aspects of the distribution of ions at certain interfaces. The range of the projects stems partly from his own broad interests and initiative, and partly from his willingness to accept the challenge of problems posed to him by the groups with which we collaborate. In all of these projects Ronen has been a primary driver working largely independently. I have no doubt that he has the ability and skills to maintain and run his own research program. I also must note that Ronen is very careful and extremely thorough in his research. He has built a very solid basis for his various projects, which is now being translated into a solid publication record and one that will more fully reflect his actual work.

On a personal level Ronen Zangi has an unassuming character and is a very easy and pleasant person with whom to collaborate. He works well with other people and is very well liked in the group. His natural tendency is to understate his ability and contributions but is forthright if required. While in Groningen Ronen has not been directly involved in undergraduate teaching and I thus cannot comment on his interactions with students, but as his research presentations are clear and concise I have little doubt he would make a good lecturer.

In summary Dr. Ronen Zangi is a very bright and talented scientist for whom I have the utmost respect. He would without question be an asset in any department whether it had a Physical or Biological focus. I personally will be very sorry when he leaves and wish I could offer him a permanent position myself. Finally, if for any reason you would like further information or for me to confirm specific aspects I have mentioned above, please feel free to contact me at the address above.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Alan E. Mark', written in a cursive style.

Prof. dr. Alan E. Mark