

MICHIGAN STATE
U N I V E R S I T Y

November 25, 2003

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

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing this letter of recommendation on behalf of Dr. Tatyana Barabash Sharpee, who is being considered for a junior faculty position in your department. Tatyana was a graduate student in our department and received her Ph.D. degree in Condensed Matter Theory in 2001 under the supervision of Professor Mark Dykman. She was a student in my graduate Quantum Mechanics class during the Fall of 1996 and Spring of 1997. Also, I served as a member of her Ph.D. guidance committee. As a result I come to know her very well both as a person and a physicist. After finishing her Ph.D. in condensed matter theory in correlated electron tunneling she decided to change to biophysics and joined the theoretical neurobiology program at UCSF as a Sloan Fellow. She has visited MSU once since joining UCSF and has given a seminar on her biophysics research. During this visit I spent some time talking to her about her research program.



Dr. S.D. Mahanti
*Professor of Physics and
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Tatyana came to this country after doing her Master's degree at a very prestigious university in Kiev (in former Soviet Union, now in Ukraine). She came with an excellent academic record. In my Quantum Mechanics class, she was clearly the best, way ahead of other students in the class. Her understanding of the subject was quite deep. She was very much involved with the class and asked many penetrating questions. I have taught most of the graduate courses here during last 30 years. She will be clearly among the top 1% of the entire lot. She reminded me of another brilliant student I had in my statistical mechanics course almost 30 years ago, Cathy Clark, who is now Professor Catherine Hunt, a University distinguished professor at MSU. Tatyana is equally brilliant. I knew from her course work that Tatyana was going to be an excellent research scholar. This turned out to be true. Tatyana gave several presentations here based on her thesis project, and they were of very high quality. She published several excellent papers based on her research here. Her current research program about which I read from her write-up looks very exciting. Unfortunately, I have not worked in that field and cannot therefore give any critical remarks.

Besides doing extremely well in her coursework and research here at MSU, Tatyana was an excellent influence on other graduate students. She has an extremely pleasant personality and here she interacted both with the faculty members and graduate students very well. I am confident that she will be an excellent teacher, researcher, student mentor, and a faculty colleague. I strongly recommend her for your faculty position.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S.D. Mahanti', with a stylized flourish at the end.

S.D. (Bhanu) Mahanti
Professor of Physics