

December 31, 2003

Center for Computational Biology

Biocomplexity Faculty Search  
c/o Ms. Yana Teterina  
Department of Physics  
Indiana University  
Swain West 117  
727 East 3<sup>rd</sup> Street  
Bloomington, IN 47405-7105

Re: Yong Kong, Ph.D.

Dear Chair, Search Committee:

This letter of recommendation is submitted in support of Dr. Yong Kong who is applying for a tenure-track faculty position in biophysics at Indiana University. First, let me qualify myself. I received my Ph.D. in 1966 from Rockefeller University working under the direction of Prof. R. Bruce Merrifield, Nobel Laureate. I am currently Professor of Biochemistry and Molecular Biophysics and of Biomedical Engineering at Washington University, as well as the former director for the Center of Molecular Design. I am internationally recognized in the fields of peptide chemistry and computer-aided drug design, having received major awards from the American Peptide Society (duVigneaud Award, 1994; Merrifield Award, 2001), the American Chemical Society (Medicinal Chemistry Award, 1988; Midwest Award, 1996), the Chinese Peptide Society (Cathay Award, 2000), the St. Louis Regional Commerce and Growth Association (Science and Technology Award, 1996), and the Missouri Biotechnology Association (2003 Award in Life Sciences – Serial Entrepreneur) as well as a D.Sc.(hon.) from the Technical University (Polytechnika), Lodz, Poland.

I have known Dr. Kong personally since he joined the Biophysics program as a graduate student. It was very apparent from his research seminars and confirmed many times over in conversations about his research project (I was on his thesis committee; we have a very proactive approach) that Mike has considerable potential as a scientist/educator. He developed a maturity of perspective and a background of knowledge that was unusual, even for one much more experienced. His contributions to development of algorithms and mathematical derivations that led to significant improvements/insights into computational biophysics under his mentor, Prof. Jay Ponder, were exceptional. I was surprised when he decided to enter industry for personal reasons as Mike was intellectually the top candidate for an academic position from his generation of biophysics students. Besides these intellectual attributes, he has a delightful subtle sense of humor and interacts well with others. Dr. Kong was highly motivated and hard working and was able to function independently most of the time in the Ponder group, a strong accolade for someone at his stage of career. I have no real idea of the research efforts that Dr. Kong has pursued at Curagen,

but I sure that he has matured in his interpersonal skills and broaden his perspective on bioinformatics in particular and computational biology in general. His industrial experience should provide a firm understanding of practical applications and a good basis for successful grant applications.

With regard to teaching potential, he certainly demonstrated the ability to organize and present complex systems in a lucid manner to a diverse audience during his many presentations at our joint research group meetings. In conclusion, Mike Kong is an exceptional intellect with tremendous potential for making significant scientific contributions in computational biophysics and bioinformatics. In order to give you some sense of a comparative scale, Washington University Medical School is the most difficult to obtain admission by any objective criteria. Approximately one-fifth of the medical students also obtain a Ph.D.; in competition with the cream from American universities, Mike Kong stood out. If you have any questions on topics that I have not covered, or my generally taciturn nature has not been effusive enough, please feel free to contact me (314-362-1567 or [garland@pcg.wustl.edu](mailto:garland@pcg.wustl.edu))

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Garland R. Marshall". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent initial "G".

Garland R. Marshall  
Professor and Member